

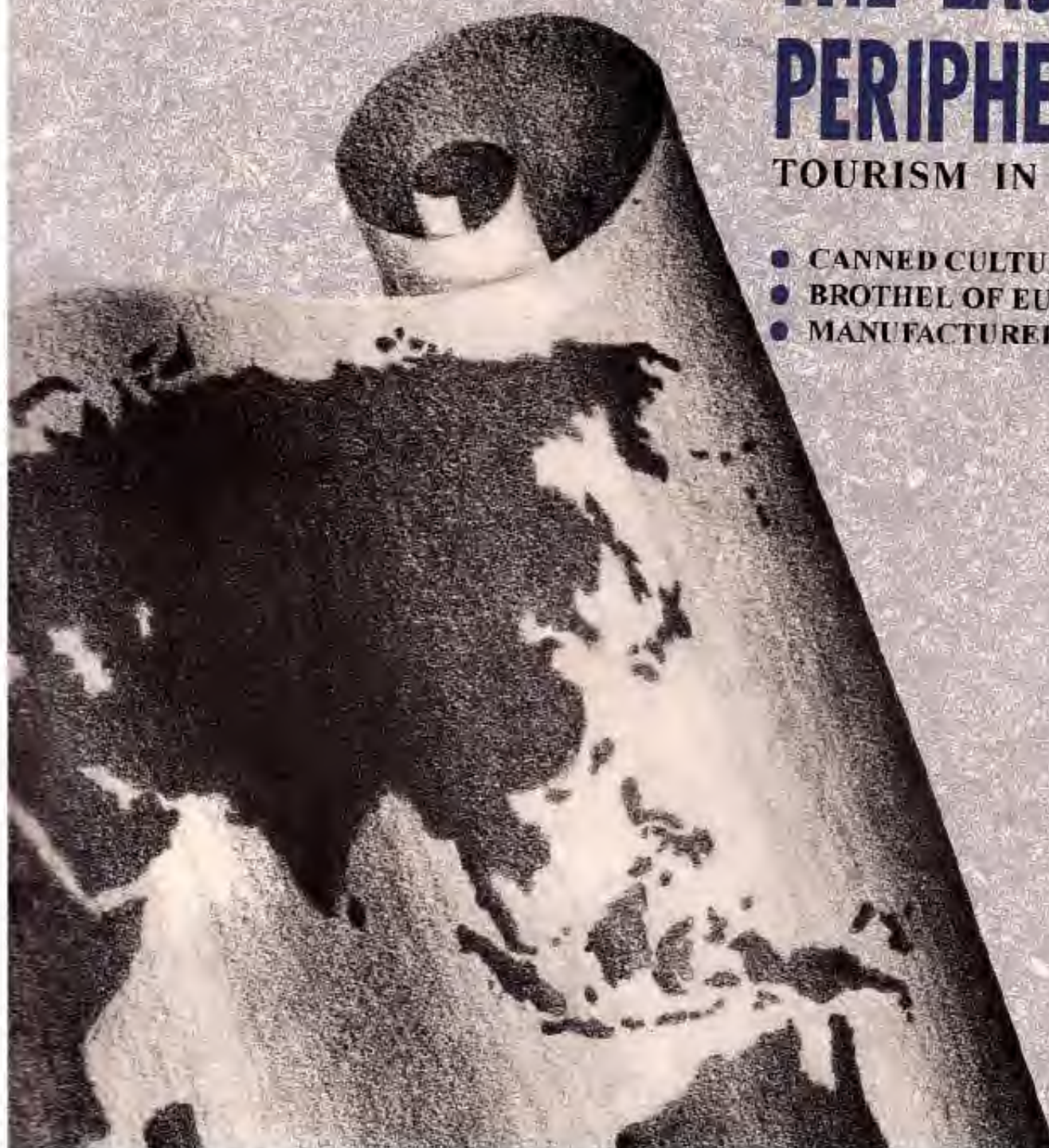
VOL. II No. 4 Rs. 14



# THE LAST PERIPHERY

TOURISM IN ASIA

- CANNED CULTURE
- BROTHEL OF EUROPE
- MANUFACTURED MYTHS





## TREE OF THE ISSUE

### TAMARIND



*Ambli, imli (Hindi), Tintil, nuli, ambli (Bengali) Puli (Tamil, Malayalam), Chinna (Telugu), Amli (Marathi), Tamarind, Indian Date (English)*

In spite of the fact that the flowers of the Tamarind are inconspicuous, it is quite one of our most handsome trees. It grows to a large size and great age and at all times of the year is a beautiful sight with its fine, spreading limbs and canopy of billowing foliage. Native to tropical Africa, it is now cultivated or naturalised all over India, Burma, Sri Lanka and Malaysia.

The Tamarind has a short, strong trunk whose bark is almost black and covered with longitudinal fissures and horizontal cracks. The oldest recorded age of a Tamarind is 200 years.

In May and June, sprays of small, scented flowers appear, which on close examination, have an unexpected beauty. The petals are creamy or yellow and covered with a fine net-work of deep red veining. The pods, which are usually fairly numerous, are sickle-shaped or like long, thick beans. They are at first green but become buff and brittle when ripe. The seeds, from one to ten, are contained in a fibrous pulp. In some varieties of Tamarind the pulp is brown and acid, in others it is sweet but the best is considered to be the one with reddish pulp.

At times, the tree is bare enough for many of the branches and twigs to be seen. Then the leaves are dark green and dull; but at the beginning of the year and sometimes in September too, new, fresh leaves appear. The transformation is striking. One week there is a tired, dusty tree; the next, a billowing cloak of brilliant green covers it from top to bottom.

No part of the tree is without its use. The pulp is a popular ingredient for curries and preserves and makes a good *sherbet*. Medicinally it is used as a laxative. The ground seeds, boiled to a paste with gum, make a strong cement; from them too, is obtained a substitute for wheat or other flour, used by tribals to make *chapattis*. The husks of the seeds have been used for road surfacing!

The leaves make a good poultice for boils; also an infusion from them makes a fine yellow dye which is used to give a green colour to silk previously dyed with indigo. And the wood, though difficult to work, is widely used for making wheels, mallets, furniture, etc.

Country people believe that the tree exudes unhealthy vapours, which is not mere superstition, for tents pitched under Tamarinds in wet weather become discoloured and rotten after a time; many plants will not grow beneath them, though this does not apply to all herbs and shrubs.

The name Tamarind is from the Persian *Tamar-i-Hindi* which means 'Indian date'.

(*Flowering Trees and Shrubs in India - D.V.Cowen*).

SAVE INDIA'S TREES!



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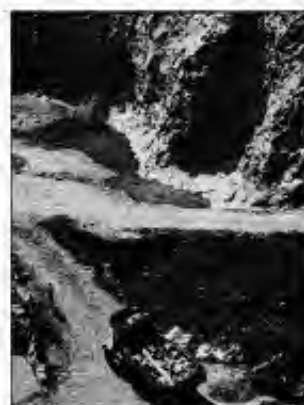
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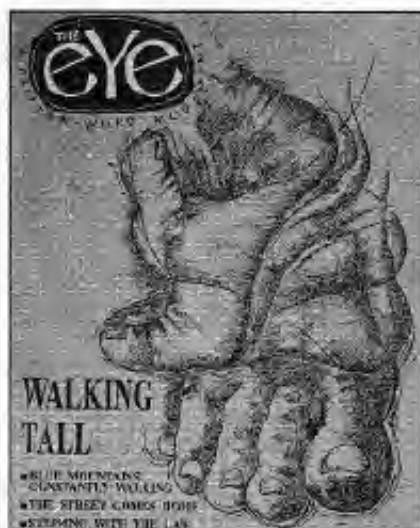
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PANCHATANTRA



Dear Editor,

The Vol 2 No.3 issue of *THE EYE*, *Walking Tall*, was as delightful as its previous issues. I am becoming worried, though, about the schedule of publication. Maybe you should consider making *THE EYE* a quarterly in order to catch up, as well as maintain the high standards of the magazine. Quite frankly, I think to publish a magazine such as this can be very tough under tight financial circumstances.

In the current issue I enjoyed most of the articles, especially the one by Satish Kumar. The interview with Acharya Tulsi was absorbing. I like the new cartoon section. Please make sure it continues. The only complaint I have is regarding the selection of poems. It is really unfortunate that modern poetry has come to such a sorry state that the reader is left with strange feelings that I don't associate with the experience of reading good poetry.

Once again, congratulations for a great issue! Please carry on the good work.

**Dhanada K. Mishra**  
1512 Gilbert Ct.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105,  
USA.

Dear Editor,

*THE EYE* has always carried rich and multifaceted articles, giving the reader various aspects of a concept or a new facet to culture that one was alien to. In the era of planes, trains, automobiles and rockets, your issue *Walking Tall* was perhaps the need of the hour. The magazine, through the written word, has opened the doors to a magical heritage.

The word 'culture' must necessarily include food as a way of life. A most interesting walk would be one down a sweetmeat street or 'parathewali gali' in Chandini Chowk, Old Delhi, to watch a *khansama* (cook) busy at work. Will the two-minute culture of food take over generations old recipes? I do hope that *THE EYE* will dedicate an issue to Indian cuisine. So here's to many more masala packed issues...with a little sugar, a lot of spice and of course, all that's nice!

**Molshree Sharma, Std X**  
Sardar Patel Vidyalaya,  
New Delhi.

Dear Editor,

I have just received the delightful issue of *THE EYE* on *Walking* and am enjoying reading every article in it. As an avid walker myself, I find the issue extra interesting! Maybe I will join one of the nature walks in Delhi....

**Bhuvana Lakshmi**  
Sri Aurobindo Ashram  
New Delhi.

Dear Editor,

At a time when one is giving up reading magazines as their inspirational content diminishes to match their spiralling rise in price, I was delighted to make the acquaintance of *THE EYE*. It is young in vision and jauntily refreshing in style. Above all, it symbolises what one person's faith in lasting values can achieve.

*SPIC MACAY*'s growth is a marvellous demonstration of how every one of us holds the miniscule seed of mustard - that if not surrendered to the winds of cynicism - sprouts to become a giant tree wherein the Upanishadic bird resides.

**Bill Aitken**  
21, Friends Colony West,  
New Delhi- 110065.

Dear Editor,

Kudos for the issue on *Walking*. In an age when automation seems to have almost taken over our lives, it was nice to be reminded of the finer aspects of living. The article *Wanderer* by Satish Kumar made very interesting reading and spoke volumes about the power of goodwill and love.

**Arpit Agarwal**  
Aurosarjan Boutique  
6 Rue Bussy,  
Pondicherry.

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*Nearly all of them were stocked with convention facilities and conventional facilities - squash courts, health clubs, equipment for wind surfing and, of course, theatres for the presentation of local culture. For a touch of imported romance, there were even horse drawn buggies on hand.*

Pico Iyer on Nusa Dua, Bali, in his book *Video Nights in Kathmandu*.



*The key to the humanisation of travel is the new, all round individual. Not just a holiday person, but a human being, aware of himself (and of others) and of his travel motives and desires; one who has learned to be self-critical and to use his experiences of other cultures to see himself in a new light. This person will have undertaken or be prepared to undertake, what we may call an inner journey, on the way acquiring humility and a willingness to share these qualities. Only then shall we be able to bring travel more humanity.*

Jost Krippendorf in *The Holiday Makers*.



These quotations from two modern writers have been chosen for the polarity of their descriptions of some of the aspects of contemporary travel. This issue on Tourism explores the difficult terrain that is straddled by this mammoth industry. Having reached the last periphery, namely Asia, and apparently, here to stay, we can no longer ignore its overriding presence.

We are primarily concerned with the linkages of modern work, economics, home, leisure and tourism. The manner in which this 'smokeless industry' is approached and propagated seems to neatly parcel us into 'working man, leisure man, weekend man and holiday man'. However, our writers in these pages have delved into several aspects of modern tourism and drawn out its incredible impacts on socio-economic situations, culture, lifestyle, health and general attitude. Tourism is now a larger-than-life entity screaming for an alternate view or critique.

Help came through two timely sources; Nina Rao, an authority on the subject who became our Guest Editor and Equations, an NGO concerned with third world tourism, especially South Asia. Our writers have excelled themselves in linking up tourism with their particular disciplines. And a special mention must be made of Ripin Kalra whose illustrations lend more than a little spice to the pages.

We do hope that you, the reader-traveller, will find this issue interesting and be concerned about some of its contents. As peripatetic humankind, move we must, but how? That is the question. In the words of Eliot,

*We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.*



# GUEST EDITORIAL

When we began to discuss this issue on Tourism, we became aware of the completely new direction that the tourism discourse was taking. We identified that the catalysts in this process were the tourism activists, wherever they were in the world. Activist research had taken as its point of departure, the weakness of the mainstream tourism impact studies in dealing with the conquest of destinations and receiving cultures as a process of exchange. So one-sided were these studies that they did not look at resort regions in the Third World as points of origin for the world tourist market, because in the ideological framework of international tourism, Asia, Africa and Latin America were the new destinations, the warm 'South', which had only a pre-determined role to play in the unfolding scenario. The purchasing power of two crore Indians, for example, was to have no impact on the motivation and behaviour of the tourist or on the demand for tourist oriented products.

We decided to take a look at these issues more closely to evaluate the tourism phenomenon, which is set to take off in a big way in India. We therefore, looked to the relatively new discipline of the *sociology of tourism* to identify how the ex-colonial subject becomes the objectified 'other' (see note) in the tourism discourse in order to understand whether any shift has taken place in this process. In the case studies we invited for this issue, we saw that the tone, the separation, the commoditisation and the view of the Asian other remains simplistic, naturalistic, feminine, mysterious and strange. On the other hand, the

tourism discourse assumes the need for *staged events* that often relate to the encapsulated nature of mass tourism, imposing concepts of culture, identity and tradition which have meaning for the centres from which tourists originate, but maybe completely unreal to those who live at tourist destinations. Culture shock arises from a too sudden absorption into tourism development, where individual and situational determinants of adjustments do not have the time to operate; for example, the signs and cues we take for granted, like words, gestures and facial expressions, customs and norms on which we depend to negotiate a social space, without feeling frustrated or anxious.

The so-called 'guest-host relation-

ship, outside of the tourism discourse does not threaten either the guest or the host. In fact, the Asian tradition of the 'uninvited guest' is perhaps a reflection of a society so secure in its material and social cohesiveness, that the 'other' was never considered to be the location of conflict, as was the case in Europe, which had a tradition of violence and change. Can we claim that the tourist/resident relationship is that of guest and host? Are these terms not imposed by what is known as the 'hospitality industry'? In the case

study/field work that has recently been published, there is a debate on terms which the tourism discourse has imposed on destinations.

Is the fascination with a new culture enough to overcome hostility towards or frustration with cultural norms and traditions at the destination? Biculturalism or cross cultural encounters based on a *commercial relationship* can hardly be said to recreate the contours of a guest. Similarly, a sense of loss, of rejection and a feeling of impotence that people at the destination feel can hardly be described as the joy of playing host. The very word 'encounter' indicates a warlike situation! Ordinary situations like attending rituals and ceremonies, making contact with the opposite sex, ordering meals, shopping, using the bathroom etc. can suddenly become obstacles which cause either embarrassment or frustration. Similarly, rules regarding exchange of gifts,

*Culture shock arises from a too sudden absorption into tourism development, where individual and situational determinants of adjustments do not have the time to operate. For example, the signs and cues we take for granted, like words, gestures and facial expressions, customs and norms on which we depend to negotiate a social space without feeling frustrated or anxious.*

bargaining, eating and drinking and time keeping, also divide cultures. Cross-cultural differences are transformed in the arena of tourism into *power play*. The debate centres on who is empowered to set the rules.

The tourism discourse on the transformation of the self concentrates much more on 'going away' rather than 'going towards'. The destination then becomes the threshold, where the tourist leaves behind social roles, rules and norms, which will be recovered on the return home. The destination becomes

the commodity where one finds a timeless, workless paradise, peopled with natives to serve you with a smile. There are only a few tourists who seek an alternative centre 'out there' to bring meaning back to their routinised lives.

When we begin to look at the *anthropology of tourism*, we see the destination as the 'field' which involves a restructuring of information, 'reinventing of tradition' and 're-creation' of identity according to classificatory systems which are both complex and contradictory. In South Asian tourism this has meant a new relationship between the state and a local culture - as a planner of tourism development, as a marketer of cultural meaning, as an arbiter of cultural practices to be displayed to the tourists' gaze and as the arena of a new form of politics. Since the tourist is a 'voluntary, temporary traveller in expectation of pleasure, novelty and change', how does the state intervene in bringing the tourist and destination together? For example, the *All Asia Guide* of the *Far Eastern Review* states: 'If you want sex in Asia it is there: fundamentally to be enjoyed without guilt, a matter of appetite not romance. In most places it is free and easy; most Asians prefer not to talk about it... Asia's lights o' love are mostly young, pretty, gay and a welcome change from the hard faced crones found in the West.'

Club Med has also come to Asia, where 'agents can arrange demonstrations of shadow puppet making, top spinning, weaving, rice pounding, traditional games, singing and dancing...the villagers can also serve afternoon tea and a traditional dinner at a local home'.

Tourism is not of one type and Valene Smith has suggested a five fold typology:

- Recreational or sunlust tourism based on sun, sea, sand and sex.
- Environmental tourism using natural scenery or unique human landscapes as resources.
- Historical tourism using relics of a past culture as a resource.

*India is largely traditional and vegetarian, but we have nightclubs and beaches where you can bare all. Indian women may look traditional but among them are those who have been married and divorced frequently, between making films, dancing, cooking or ruling the country.*

- Ethnic tourism which aims at living cultures.
- Cultural tourism which aims at culture, picturesque or quaint customs or local colour, including a vanishing lifestyle like old style houses, hand made crafts etc.

In all these typologies the destination is merely contextual, its role being relegated to that of shaping the tourists' experience, without

focussing on the specificity of the cultures' identity.

This leads to the *making of new cultural statements* in the form of making a choice - of which part of a country's culture or national identity should be conveyed to the tourist. *The India Show* on Star TV is a good case in point: India is largely traditional and vegetarian, but we have nightclubs and beaches where you can bare all. Indian women may look traditional but among them are those who have been married and divorced frequently, between making films, dancing, cooking or ruling the country.

State sponsored cultural productions like the fairs and festivals at home and abroad are put together for the tourist but become the culture of the native elite as well, by creating authentic ethnic markers which then define both the past and the present. 'Western style', the slogan of the travel trade, then becomes the most visible definition of modernity at the destination and the tourists' behaviour, the most visible demonstration of modern behaviour.

We hope that the articles in this issue will help our reader to reflect on the challenges of Tourism, to look beyond the hype and to sift the real from the fantastic. We are going to be at both ends of the debate - as tourists and as residents.

-NINA RAO

#### Note:

Edward Said's postmodernist book, *Orientalism*, argues that from ancient to modern times, the West has defined its own identity by creating an alternative 'other'. This 'other' is the Orient and Orientalism is 'a systematic discipline by which European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient... as a sort of surrogate self...'. Thus Orientalism is the 'discourse' of colonial expansion, the language of them and us. However, this theoretical edifice has been challenged by Aijaz Ahmed in his book, *In Theory: Classes, Nations and Literatures*.

# ONCE UPON A TIME

ROMILLA THAPAR

*I have always wondered what preparations Hsuan Tsang must have made to set off on his journey to India over the Himalayas. And what happened to his family? Did they wither away with anxiety the years he was gone? Or was it an accepted part of life then, of the human condition some thirteen hundred years ago?*

*The scene is changing dramatically with technology, progress, time, call it what you will. Increasingly now, you race to an airport through unending traffic, fill up bits and pieces of irrelevant information on to cards which will finally be thrown into a computer or waste paper basket, strap yourself on to a chair much the same as the chair you left at home, and caged in that plane you leave the earth in a burst of noise. Down to earth again, swallowed up by yet another cavernous airport, along with thousands of others you charge across numerous corridors with their little card - receiving outposts to reach a hotel which could be much the same every place you go.*

*It all happens so quickly and yet seems to take so long, like playing a game with time. There seems little occasion for that brush with another culture, another terrain, another people.....*

*Judging from the meticulousness of the earlier accounts, even language seems to have been less of a barrier than it is today. The traveller had to learn it; there was no alternative. Actually, speed cuts out much of the excitement, much of life. One is filled with a vicarious nostalgia for those winding caravan journeys over parched deserts, for the monsoon-tossed voyages to Java and beyond, even for the traumas of the lone individualists who set out on foot, undaunted by the possible encounters with strange men and stranger beasts.*

*Very few in our generation could write off a few years for a journey - as people certainly did in the past. And they must have had to suffer for it in physical terms far more agonising than we can imagine. To transcend the heat and the snow and sea sickness and what have you, the urge to travel must have been awesome.*

**Raj Thapar.**

***The Invincible Traveller***

*The essay, **Once Upon a Time** is from an interesting collection called **The Invincible Traveller**, edited by Raj Thapar. We present below, a small extract from the essay, which deals with an episode in the journey of a great Chinese traveller, Hsuan Tsang. No issue on tourism is complete without the inclusion of the great and brave 'traveller of yore', the walker, the sailor and the seeker.*

**T**he Indian has been an inveterate traveller for many millenia. Merchants, traders, pilgrims, monks, religious mendicants and the emissaries of royal courts were all on the move. For some, travelling became a full time

occupation with virtually no capital investment, and continues to be so as in the case of wandering sadhus. Traders and monks are, however, the most visible both in numbers and in impact from these early descriptions, for the

incentives from trade and the mission to preach took people long distances. Among outsiders, the vision of India remained fairly constant. Images were born from the accounts of visitors to the country and possibly confirmed by Indians settled outside where, like many settlers, the land they had left behind probably took on in time the contours of a utopia. But in the earlier centuries it was curiosity that encouraged visits to India....

....India produced only one religion for export - Buddhism - with a mechanism for proselytising, and this proved very successful. From the fourth century A.D. onwards, various Buddhist pilgrims visited India and among these the most prominent were the Chinese in search of the 'western heaven', the holy land of the true doctrine and where the Buddha had lived. The accounts of their travels describe in detail the horrors which they had to overcome, fighting with demons and hostile supernatural forces, to reach India. They provide meticulous itineraries of places visited, Buddhist monasteries at which they stayed, and the general condition of Buddhism in India. The earliest of these pilgrims was Fa Hien who left China in AD 399 and travelled by slow stages stopping at various central Asian monasteries. He was followed in the 7th Century by Hsuan Tsang and later by I Tsing.....

Some travelled to India in great discomfort and suffered great hardships, such as these Chinese Buddhist pilgrims, but they were determined to reach it. The piety of the pilgrims was constantly rewarded by the wicked being converted to virtue. The brigands (in the account below) who try to sacrifice Hsuan Tsang see the light and become Buddhists. (*The Life of Hsuan Tsang* by Samuel Beal).

The Master of the Law left the kingdom of Ayodhya, having paid reverence to the sacred places, and following the course of the river Ganges, proceeded eastward, being on board a vessel with about eighty other fellow-passengers. He wished to reach the



kingdom of 'O-ye-mu-khi' (Hayamukha). After going about a hundred li, both banks of the river were shrouded by the thick foliage of an Asoka forest, and amid these trees on either bank were concealed some ten pirate boats. Then these boats, propelled by oars, all at once burst forth into the midstream. Some of those in the ship, terrified at the sight, cast themselves into the river, whilst the pirates, taking the ship in tow, brought it to the bank. They then ordered the men to take off their clothes, and searched them in quest of jewels and precious stones.

Now these pirates pay worship to Durga, a spirit of heaven, and every year during the autumn, they look out for a man of good form and comely features, whom they kill, and offer his flesh and blood in sacrifice to their divinity, to procure good fortune. Seeing that the Master of Law was suitable for their purpose, both in respect of his distinguished bearing and his bodily strength and appearance, they exchanged joyful glances and said, "We were letting the season for sacrificing to our god pass by, because we could not find a suitable person for it, but now this *sraman* is of noble form and pleasing features - let us kill him as a sacrifice, and we shall gain certain good fortune."

The Master of the Law replied, "If this poor defiled body of mine is indeed suitable for the purpose of the sacrifice you propose, I, in truth, dare not grudge (the offering), but as my intention in coming from a distance was to pay reverence to the image of Bodhi and the Grindrakuta Mountain, and to inquire as to the character of the Sacred Books and the Law (or, the Law of the Sacred Books), and as this purpose has not yet been accomplished, if you,



The Chinese Pilgrim Hsuan Tsang

my noble benefactors (*danapati*s) kill this body of mine, I fear it will bring you misfortune instead of good fortune."

Moreover, his fellow-passengers all, with one voice, asked them to spare

*Now these pirates pay worship to Durga, a spirit of heaven, and every year during the autumn, they look out for a man of good form and comely features, whom they kill, and offer his flesh and blood in sacrifice.*



The lone caravan

him, and some even prayed to be allowed to die in his stead, but the pirates would not consent.

Then the captain of the gang despatched some men with water to arrange the ground, and to erect in the midst of the flowering grove an altar besmeared with mud. He then commanded two of the company to take their drawn knives and to bind the Master of the Law upon the altar. And now, when they were about to use their knives for the purpose of sacrificing him, the Master of the Law showed no sign of fear in his face, insomuch that all the pirates were moved to astonishment.

When he saw there was no escape, however, he spoke to the pirates and begged them to allow him a little time and not to crowd round him painfully, but "let me", he said, "with a joyous mind, take my departure".

Then the Master of the Law, with an undivided mind bent on the courts of Tusita heaven, thought on the Bodhisattva Maitreya, and earnestly prayed to be born in that place, that he might pay reverence and his religious offerings (to the Bodhisattva), and receive from him the *Yogachariya-bhumi-sastra*, and listen to the sound of the excellent Law. Then having perfected himself throughout in wisdom, "let me return (he prayed) and be born here below, that I may instruct and convert these men, and cause them to practise themselves in doing good and to give up their evil deeds, and thus by diffusing, far and wide, the benefits of religion, to give rest to all the world".

Then the Master of the Law, paying worship to the Buddhas of the ten regions, collected his mind into perfect composure, and sitting still, fixed his thoughts on Maitreya without any interruption. Thus he

seemed in his innermost thoughts as if he rose up above Mount Sumeru and successively ascending one, two, three heavens, he gazed upon the courts of Tusita, the place of Maitreya, with its excellently precious adornments (galeries) and the multitude of *devas* surrounding him on every side. At this time his body and soul were ravished with joy, he knew nothing of the altar on which he was, he had no recollection of the robbers. And now, whilst his fellow passengers gave way to cries and tears, suddenly a black tempest (typhoon) arose from the four quarters of heaven, smiting down the trees; clouds of sand flew on every side; and the lashing waves of the river tossed the boats to and fro. The robbers and their company, greatly terrified, asked the companions of the Master, "Whence comes this *sraman*? What is his name and title?" and so on. They, answering, said, "He comes from the country of China - he is the renowned person who is in search of the Law; if you, my masters kill him, your guilt will be immeasurable; look now and see the winds and waves - these are but indications of the anger of the spirit of heaven:

haste then to repent!"

The pirates then, filled with fear, urged each other to repentance and confession of their fault; then with bowed heads they made profound obeisance (or, they embraced the religion of Buddha). And now one of the robbers accidentally touching the Master of the Law with his hand, he opened his eyes and said to the robber, "Has the hour come?" The robber answered, "We dare not hurt the Master! We pray you accept our repentance!" The Master then accepted their reverence and confession of faults, and then preached to them about the future punishment in Avichi of those who gave themselves up to murder, robbery, and impious sacrifices, and other evil deeds. "How would you then risk the woes of the long-enduring *asankheya* of ages for the sake of this body of yours, which is but in point of time as the lightning flash or the dew of the morning?"

The robbers then bowed their heads and confessed their faults, saying: "We indeed, individually, were perverted by a foolish turn of mind, and led to do what we ought not to do, and to sacrifice (pay religious rites) to what we

ought not to sacrifice. If we had not met with the Master—whose religious merit has moved even the mysterious powers of heaven, how should we ever have been led to repentance? And now we ask to give up from the present day these evil ways of ours, and we pray the Master to be witness to our sincerity!"

On this they each encouraged one another to deeds of amendment, and collecting their various instruments of robbery together, they cast them into the river, and whatever clothes or private property they had taken they restored these to their rightful owners, and then they took on themselves the five obligations of a lay-believer.

Then the winds and the floods subsided, and the pirates were all overcome with joy, and bowed their heads in adoration. His fellow voyagers, moreover, were filled with surprise and admiration more than ever, whilst those present and absent who heard of the event could not help exclaiming with wonder at the occurrence: "If it were not for the power of his high resolve in seeking for the Law, this could not have come to pass!"

(*The Invincible Traveller*, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.)

**ANTENNA** (Asian Tourism Action Network) was formally established in early 1992 with the Thai Network on Tourism issues. It is made up of people with shared ideals of democratic pluralism and economic egalitarianism and respect for the diversity of nature and culture.

**EQUATIONS**, (Equitable Tourist Options) an NGO, links up with ANTENNA and is responsible for initial promotional actions in the South East Asia region. It had its first meeting in Penang in April 1993, with the focus on Golf Tourism now burgeoning in the area.

The first meeting of ANTENNA, South Asia Region was held in Bangalore, September 8th and 9th, 1993. Hosted by EQUATIONS, the participants were from Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Goa and Delhi. The purpose of the meeting was to identify common issues and concerns in the region, as well as to explore ways and means of strengthening regional action on tourism issues.

Synthesising the presentations made at the meeting, and the issues arising from them, participants felt that the essential basis for networking in South Asian tourism comprise the following: the extent to which tourism issues in South Asia are viewed as specific to the South Asian socio-political context, and if so, the possibility of articulating a South Asia-specific tourism critique.

The role of EQUATIONS would be to continue acting as a resource and information centre on third world tourism issues, focussing on India. It also networks with other partners in South Asia, together with NETWAC (Nepal Tourist Watch Centre) and CWF (Christian Workers' Fellowship) in Sri Lanka.

ANTENNA's efforts also include a publication, the AN Letter which is a quarterly and is available in India for an annual subscription of Rs. 100/-, a monthly Documentation Update at Rs. 200/- and monographs at Rs. 25/-.

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# THE HOLIDAY MAKERS

JOST KRIPPENDORF

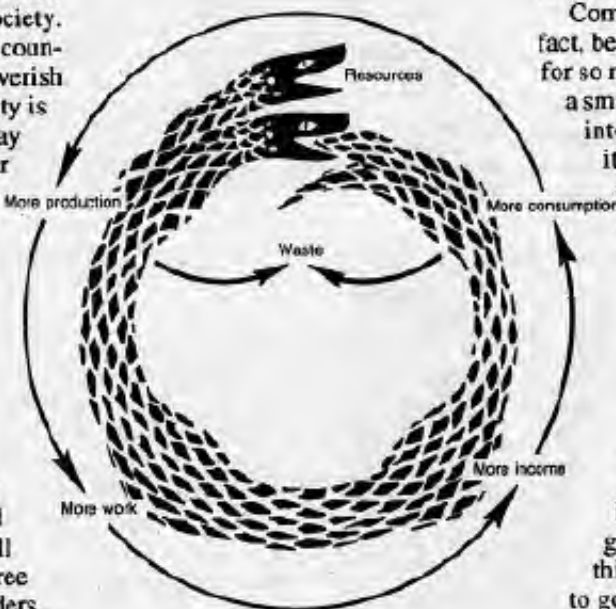
*You need a change of soul rather than a change of climate. You must lay aside the burdens of the mind; until you do this, no place will satisfy you.*

Seneca

## Masses on the move

A restless activity has taken hold of the once so sedentary human society. Most people in the industrialized countries have been seized by a feverish desire to move. Every opportunity is used to get away from the workday routine as often as possible. Shorter trips during the week and on weekends, longer journeys during the holidays. The fondest wish for old age is a new place to which to retire. Anything to get away from home! Away from here, at any cost!

Thus, year in year out, weekend after weekend, without any real necessity and without overt pressure, millions of people flock together to spend their precious free time. They all participate in it of their own free will, and yet as if following orders. They form long lines of cars or get transported in bus, jumbo jet and train shipments. They lie crammed together on beaches that have become too small. They queue up in shops and restaurants, for ski lifts and cable cars and before not-to-be-missed sights, worn out from centuries of being admired. Sometimes they stay in accommodation reminiscent of slums. If employees were subjected to such stress during their working hours, according to one behaviour researcher, trade unions and medical officers would quite rightly intervene. Compared to the amount of travelling done today in leisure time,



*The growth cycle*

*The travel needs of the modern age have been largely created by society and shaped by everyday life. People go away because they no longer feel happy where they are - where they work, where they live.*

the migrations of peoples in antiquity look like modest work outings!

Come to think of it, we should, in fact, be happy that something that had for so many years been the pleasure of a small minority has now developed into a sport for the masses; mobility, holiday travel as a social achievement. But somehow the joy of it is slow in setting in. The thing has a seamy side for we have had to pay for what we have achieved - we have had to give something in return. The effects of our mobility, of the new freedom we fought so hard to win, threaten to engulf us. The questions that now emerge are whether, in the final analysis, we have gained something or lost something and how things are supposed to go on from here.

What has led to this leisure mobility, which has become a factor that determines the lives of many townspeople and on which they spend about 40 per cent of their spare time? 30 per cent of this time is used up on trips and short journeys, 10 per cent on longer holiday travel. And yet, man was not born a tourist. True, a yearning for far-away places and curiosity have always belonged to his inborn and strongly felt urges. They were one of the motives behind the elegant travel of the upper classes until the beginning of this century. But what drives millions of people from their homes today is not so much

*There are growing indications that the massive flight from towns, which is the present pattern of tourism, cannot be a long lasting therapy; that the thing has no future in its current form. But many people are still happily unconcerned and blissfully assume it will all continue according to the slogan: more, bigger, faster, further.*

*Below: ... away from the monotony of the assembly line, from cold rationality and oppressive technology, from the unfeeling world of steel, glass and concrete, from poisoned air and grey skies.*



*Above: Congested demands on life's pleasures. On the modern motorways, automobilism is increasingly cancelling itself out. The psychology of congestion is a new field of study!*

an innate need to travel. If we observe how people travel, what they do during their holidays and what they chiefly talk about, we shall easily discover that the drive to explore new things and learn something new, plays a very small part in it.

The travel needs of the modern age have been largely created by society and shaped by everyday life. People go away because they no longer feel happy where they are - where they work, where they live. In order to be able to carry on, they urgently need a temporary refuge from the burdens

imposed by everyday work, home and leisure scene. Their work is increasingly automated and functionalized; it is also determined by other people. They feel the monotony of the daily routine, the cold rationality of factories, offices, apartment blocks and transport, shrinking human contact, the repression of feelings, the loss of nature and naturalness. For many people these are part of the disadvantages of everyday living - they feel that life has been reduced to mere existence. It leads to stress, physical and mental exhaustion, emptiness and boredom. In order to redress the imbalance, to find what we miss or have lost in everyday life, we go away: the aim is to switch off and fill up, enjoy the independence, make our own decisions, find new friends, have a break, feel free and take home some happiness and memories. In fact, we travel in order to live and survive. The great departures of the masses in today's modern age is a consequence of circumstances,



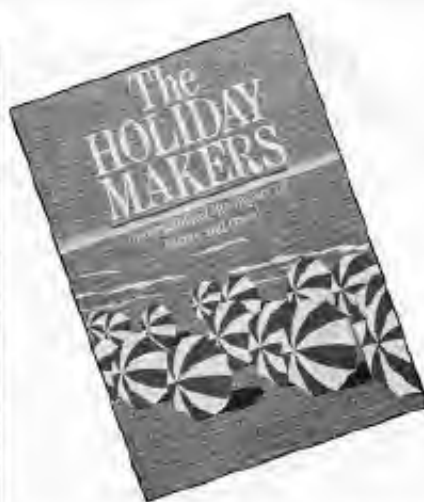


*Above: ...a dream of the Garden of Eden, of a life of leisure, of countries where lemon-trees blossom, of a Sunday world without problems and full of happiness...*

*Below: Just remember that while on holiday and away from home, I am an exceptional person and I do things I would never do normally. I want to be a pasha for a few days, give orders, be pampered by others, behave as I please. I'm not interested in what people will say. I've paid for this! And tomorrow I'll be gone anyway.*



*Analysing this situation, one leisure time researcher recently put it like this: mass tourism is one of the most marked, most momentous and least manageable forms of the leisure shock.*



bestowed upon us by the development of industrial society

But that society has given its members not only the motives but also the means of escaping: money, in the form of higher incomes, and time, thanks to ever shorter working hours and longer holidays. What is most important, industry has developed for us a vehicle which has really set the 'auto-mobile' society going. The car, and to a somewhat lesser extent, the aeroplane, have ushered in the mobile leisure revolution and brought it at breakneck speed, in a period of about two decades, to what it is today. All predictions concur: those who are not mobile today, will become mobile in the very near future. Free driving for free people! The car as a symbol of freedom par excellence. One could almost speak of a general claim to individual motorization and limitless individual mobility that we think is ours by natural right.

After all, society has placed the leisure industry at our disposal as a kind of friend and helper. It has taken charge of our leisure time and offers not only fulfilment but produces, where necessary, the corresponding desires and yearnings. Leisure and holidays as a contrasting programme to the industrial world have themselves become an industry. It is the business of the twentieth century!

All this falls into a kind of cycle, which may be termed the recreation cycle of man within industrial society: we travel in order to recharge the batteries, to restore our physical and mental strength. On our trip we consume the climate, nature and landscapes, the

*Leisure activities have  
an impact on the system  
and cannot be  
understood if they are  
isolated from their  
original determining  
factors.*

culture and people in the places we visit, which become 'therapy zones' for the purpose. We then return home, more or less fit, to defy everyday life until next time. The trick has worked! But the wish to leave again and even more often is soon with us again, because life cannot be made up for in a few weeks of holidays and on weekends. The wagon is overloaded, it overflows with wishes and longings. It is this continuous repetition of unrealized and unrealizable needs that gives the cycle its dynamics. We work in order to go on holiday, among other things, and

*The desolate home environment...*



*Their only contacts are 'handouts' - how can this lead to meaningful communication?  
Tourists as the new maharajahs.*

we need the holidays in order to be able to work again. We temporarily free ourselves of the harness only to have it put on again even tighter. If there were no escape-aid - tourism, clinics and sanatoria would have to be built to cure people from the stress of the workaday routine. Tourism is social therapy, the valve that maintains the world in good running order! It has a stabilizing effect not only on the individual but on our entire society and its economy. Sociologists have proved it: once people have succeeded in changing the scene, in switching off, they develop the need to exchange the transitoriness of tourism for the soothing stability of everyday life. People travel so that they may be confirmed in the belief that home is not so bad after all, indeed that it is perhaps the best of all. They travel in order to return. The economy too needs tourism as an energy

producer for the regeneration of the work force. This is certainly not the least of the reasons why we have been granted more leisure time.

This, then, is roughly how the great recreation machine works. A cycle repeated year in year out and in which we are all involved without being aware of it.

#### **Mass migration encounters limits**

But of late, sand has entered the wheels of this enormous machine. What seemed to function without a hitch is still running but now not quite so smoothly. On many sides the question has been raised about the purpose of the whole thing and where it is taking us. There are growing indications that the massive flight from towns, which is the present pattern of tourism, cannot be a long lasting therapy, that the thing has no future in its current form. But many people are still happily unconcerned and blissfully assume it will all continue according to the slogan: more, bigger, faster, further. It is true that most forecasts support their conviction, especially traffic forecasts, because traffic can obviously only increase. And the often quoted statement of a well-known American futurologist, saying that in the year 2000 the travel industry will be the world's biggest, is also grist to their mill.

But shouldn't we be a bit more sceptical and ask ourselves a few questions?





*Tourist development determined by strangers. People from the city have the money, they buy up the land, they develop and build. They control many things. But they don't live here, or only occasionally. The anonymous 'letter box people'.*

If we do, we will realize that the future is no longer what it used to be - that it no longer consists of an estimable and manageable expansion and that we can certainly no longer assume that everything will go on as before. Many new signals all point to a change of course.

More and more people are beginning to notice that something must be wrong with the system. The serious shortcomings felt in everyday life cannot be offset by a few brief moments of freedom, of creative inspiration, of happiness and self-determination during leisure and holiday time. They are no longer satisfied with ersatz freedom, with life in bits and pieces. They demand, openly or secretly, more life altogether. Already, ten years ago there was the following little poem in a school reader:

*With time  
you no longer  
want to dream  
the whole day about evening,  
the whole week  
about Friday,  
the whole year about holiday.  
With time  
you no longer  
want to dream  
about a new life  
which is only  
half a life.*

A joyless society should develop

into a joyful one. For an increasing number of people work is no longer the main purpose in life, and uneasiness about the present state of affairs and the wish to change something are becoming more and more widespread. What is it though, that should be changed and to what extent?

Another serious question for the future is the crisis that has spread to most industrialized countries: working society seems to be gradually running out of work. How can we cope with this new situation?

Then there are the ecologists and conservationists, who also want things to change. They want to get at the tourist landscape-eaters that are at work everywhere. For example, they will try to prevent the building of second homes in the countryside, which, according to forecasts, will soon equal one-third of all building in big towns. They want to bring to a halt the impetuous expan-



sion of the road network, prompted above all by the increase in leisure traffic. They will also oppose the furnishing of our recreation areas with all kinds of leisure facilities. They, who used to be kind of shadow organization, the green mafia, have developed into a powerful movement, and are gaining

*...away from the routine and the anonymity. The leisure industry offers not only fulfilment but produces, where necessary, the corresponding wishes and yearnings.*



support. What will be the outcome of their struggle?

Sensitivity to the negative effects of the tourist mass migration is also beginning to develop in the local population in the tourist areas. There is a growing feeling of being literally overrun and squeezed out by tourists. Don't we occasionally get the impression that local people are fed up with tourism? They want to shake off the dictatorship of the trade, take their destiny into their own hands, make their own decisions and participate in their development. What they want above all else is to



*Or are travel memories only souvenirs which people collect like stamps and put on the mantelpiece like some kind of trophy?*

shape their own environment as a place for themselves and not as a playground for other people. The locals are getting near to rebellion. True, they are (still) doing all they can to attract tourists, but they would, equally, like to do their best to prevent them from coming. It would seem, then, that a ceiling has been reached here, one of a psychological nature.

#### **'... Or else we must change the system'**

We want to examine these and other questions in the hope of arriving at something that could be more desirable than what we have today. In this we do not intend to pronounce a sweeping condemnation on all that has been created and achieved so far. Even less do we want to turn modern tourism into a scapegoat and use it in unadvised

social criticism. All those who describe the exodus of millions as the greatest plague of the western world, as the decline of civilization, as mass deception or even as a repressive instrument which our society uses to maintain a freedomless situation, as 'opium for the people' and call for its abolition, these people make the game too easy for themselves. They are engaging in futile criticism of a phenomenon that has long since become measurable reality and an extremely important social, economic and political factor. No matter how brilliant their essays or comments, the facts on which they are based are scanty. The massive flight from towns we mentioned earlier is not a carefully planned and devilish scheme of capitalist slave-drivers and wire-pullers. It is quite

simply another aspect of the development of our industrial society - the reverse side of the coin, as its critics would say. But let us not forget: this same industrial society has brought us real social achievements and progress. It has freed us from the terrible pressure of poverty. It has provided us with a roof over our heads and supplied durable means for the satisfaction of our basic needs. Over and above that, it has given us many things we would not like to do without. We have been able to improve significantly our personal situation, our living standards - and we have worked hard for it. What we have achieved is fact and cannot be eliminated from the world. It must be accepted and recognized as such. Of course, criticism of the system from the safe shelter of existing achievements is all too easy, but when development begins to bring the individual and society more disadvantages than advantages, there comes a time when criticism, and above all reflection, must take their cue. That time has now come. Our economic system, based on the merry-go-round of production and consumption, consumption and production, has developed a dangerous dynamics of its own. It is no longer a question of satisfying real human needs. Most of these have been satisfied. Nor is it a question of creating new values. The economy has moved away from people. It has placed itself above them and made itself independent in a way. It works in order to maintain its own apparatus and perpetuate itself. For this purpose it has created an alibi called force of circumstances. And force creates fear. A careful look around will show us that in many areas the cost of society, the economy and the environment by far exceeds the benefits derived from so-called development. Here is just one example: in most tourist areas and resorts a real estate market has grown up which follows its own laws and which has completely disassociated itself from tourism. The sale of building land, the building of new chalets, holiday flats, apartment blocks, hotels and other structures is still in full swing. All this is going on despite the fact that occupancy rates in existing facilities are, for the most part,



disappointingly low and declining every year, and landscapes are losing more and more of their recreational quality. It is no secret that the construction lobby is especially efficient. It would have us believe that its activities are justified by force of circumstances: namely, preservation of jobs in the building industry.

Analysing this situation, one leisure time researcher recently put it like this: mass tourism is one of the most marked, most momentous and least manageable forms of the leisure shock. We believe we have learned how to live with it. We live under the illusion that we can dam its excesses, foresee its development, eliminate its weaknesses. But in reality all we can do is wait and see what ecological, psychological and socio-economic consequences mass tourism will yet produce. Either that, or we must change our approach, change the system, produce new assumptions.

This is exactly what we should be concerned with today: we must try to see where the existing system has failed; where the ground of reality has become barren, the very ground to which people who develop new ideas are told by their critics to return to! We must learn to understand that the mere continuation of present economic and technical trends cannot bring us what we really desire in the future. Indeed, such a development would be the most inadequate, shabbiest and dangerous of all possible futures! But haven't we become so enslaved by the force of circumstances that we no longer even dare think about what we really want?

Should we decide to tackle the problem, we must transcend the established intellectual framework and base our decisions on entirely new criteria. Theories, economic estimates, political programmes and doctrines will not take us very far. Moreover, and above all, we need intuition and imagination; social imagination or the ability not to accept the existing situation as something final. We need to create something different and formulate an alternative to the current state of affairs.

As we have already observed, leisure, and tourism as one of its forms, are not worlds in themselves, following their own laws. They are the results and at the same time integral parts of

*If once we broaden our horizons, we shall see that suddenly everything becomes relevant and exerts some influence. The subject becomes broader and broader: work, home, leisure time and life in general must all be taken into account.*

industrial society and its organization. Clearly then, leisure activities have an impact on the system and cannot be understood if they are isolated from their original determining factors. Modern tourism is one of the most

striking and strangest phenomena of our times. The only way to probe its nature is to try to understand how things are connected, and to distinguish between cause and effect, expectation and reality. It is only when we realize how the mechanism works that we can learn to control it, change it and improve it.

And yet, these relationships cannot be identified if they are viewed from a narrow, mono-disciplinary angle. If once we broaden our horizons, we shall see that suddenly everything becomes relevant and exerts some influence. The subject becomes broader and broader: work, home, leisure time and life in general must all be taken into account. It makes us wonder about the nature of progress and about what we ourselves consider as desirable about our own position. And this train of thought brings us back to our original subject: leisure time and travel.

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*He has published numerous articles and books on tourism including Marketing and Tourism, The Landscape Devourers and For a Development of Tourism in Harmony with Man and Nature.*

*Professor Krippendorf was awarded the Association of German Tourism writers prize in 1977 for special merits in tourism.*

*Photographs courtesy: The Holiday Makers by Jost Krippendorf*

*The above article is extracted from The Holiday Makers by Jost Krippendorf.*

## PROPOSALS FOR THE HUMANISATION OF TRAVEL

*How can we get from extensive to intensive travel.*

*from devouring miles to lingering.*

*from ticking off items in the travel guide to stopping and thinking.*

*from rush to leisure.*

*from aggressive and destructive to creative communication*

*from camera wearing idiots to people with the third eye?*

*I believe*

*these are the important and burning issues.*

*For we are all looking for meaning and humanity.*

**Al Imfeld**

# THE FOURTH PERIPHERY AND THE TWO CONVENTIONS

NINA RAO



RIPIN KALRA

*In order to begin to understand the phenomenon of modern mass tourism, we need to be aware of certain world bodies concerned with the specific agenda of formulating tourism policies and implementing them. The World Tourism Organisation (WTO) is one such body which came about through UN initiative. How benign is their agenda? Can it be implemented in toto without examining their real and concrete impacts on third world countries? The author makes a very interesting exploration into the 'peripheries of tourism', which are now pushing host countries (mainly third world), into developing their own forums, as the one in Manila, in 1980.*

The pleasure peripheries opened up coastlines to tourists in the late 19th century, when the aristocracy of Europe visited seaside resorts in England and France. The second push came with the pioneer front of tourism establishing the palace hotels along the French and the Italian Riviéras, and along the coast of Portugal and Spain. As the middle classes followed in the wake of the aristocracy, a third push covered the eastern periphery including the Greek islands and Yalta. The warm water attraction was enhanced by a double season. Second homes and villas proliferated in these romantic regions which were attractive for their low prices and exotic locale. As the middle class followed in large numbers, a new advantage was discovered for these destinations: they provided luxury at low prices for twelve months of the year. Now the pioneer front was

ready to expand to the fourth periphery, the Third World, where miles of beach and coastline were waiting to welcome the 'Golden Hordes'. By this time, another advantage had emerged: that third world governments were ready to underwrite the development of these resorts for the foreign exchange earnings that international tourism could bring in.

In the sixties, the United Nations had also promoted tourism as a tool of development to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor nations of the world. The World Tourism Organisation, set up in 1972, began to promote tourism by setting up data banks and providing consultancy to third world nations on western lifestyle and international standards in tourism services. Tourism began to emerge as the principal industry in many countries. 1980 is considered a watershed in the globalisation of modern tourism, with



the WTO sponsoring the First World Tourism Convention at the Philippines International Convention Centre. While President Marcos was inaugurating the WTO convention, thirty participants from Asian countries met at a workshop at Manila University to assess and examine the promotion of tourism from a third world perspective. Their conclusions were quite the opposite of the WTO convention.

The WTO convention had looked at tourism policy around the world and came to conclude that before 1980, tourism had been uncontrolled, with individual enterprises provisioning tourists, with investments following market forces, which had resulted in visible and negative tourism impacts. In the post 1980 period, tourism was to be planned and integrated with the government, the public and the private sector working together to achieve the set objectives. In the light of these recommendations, India set a target of one million tourists, which took ten years to achieve.

In the pre-1980 period, tourism was promoted as an agent of economic development and growth. However, by 1980 it was evident that tourism reflected both the concentration (80% in Western Europe and North America) as well as unequal trade between destinations (more than 60% of the earnings remained in Europe and America). After 1980, the transfer of wealth argument was replaced by employment and income generation arguments, which were of concern to third world governments.

Before 1980, profits from tourism encouraged the growth of the resort peripheries, but after 1980, the benefits from tourism were emphasised, like the development of 'backward' regions and the impact on a country's balance of payments. As third world economies began to pay out more and more on account of oil imports and industrial development, they began to consider the role of tourism in terms of foreign exchange earnings.

Before 1980, the travel trade had been concerned only with prices and profits, which had led to the phenomenal expansion of tourism resorts. However, these were now 'wreaking more havoc than bringing benefits to recipient third world nations'. By 1980, tourism was

beginning to 'disrupt the way of life of host communities, by encouraging the tourist to indulge in an extravagant lifestyle in ghettos created by the tourist trade, reaping benefits off an infrastructure geared to the comfort of the tourist rather than to the basic needs of the people' (extracts from the report of the Workshop on Tourism, held in Manila, 1980).

The WTO was not committed to the values of third world people and yet it could not ignore the resistance to tourism that was manifesting itself all over the world. In the post 1980's, phased development was promoted to third world governments as a counter measure to resistance. Whereas before 1980, tourist activity had been determined by travel operators and was essentially of a passive 'seeing-the-sights' variety, after 1980, guest-host interaction, or demand oriented tourism began to reflect the post modern concern with the self and the other, who was now located in the third world rather than Europe's traditional 'other', America.

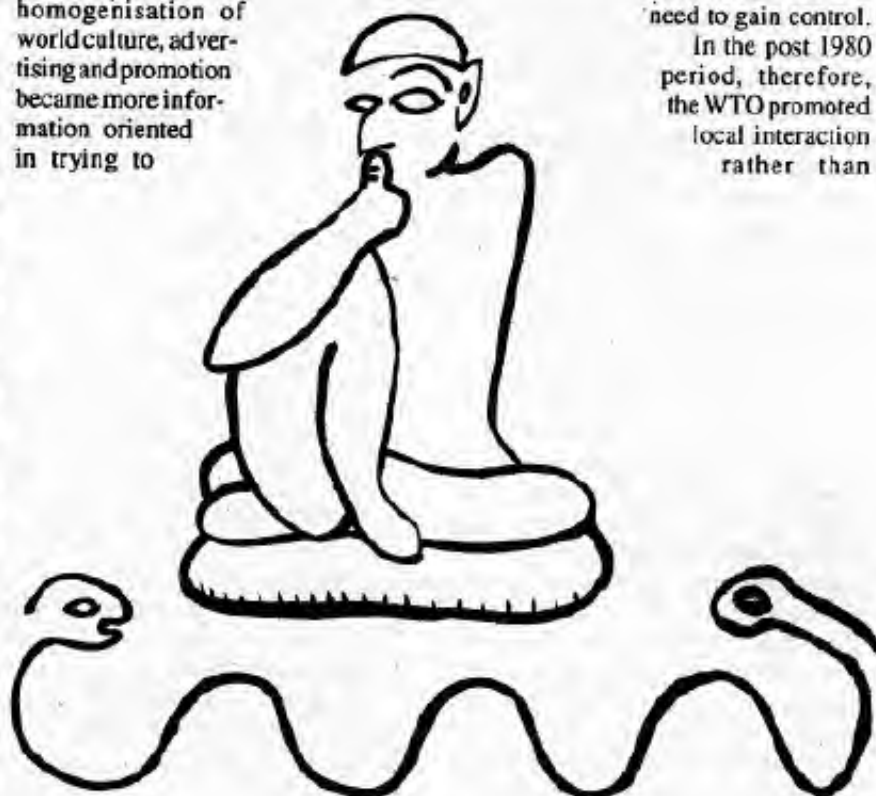
As a consequence of this shift towards a homogenisation of world culture, advertising and promotion became more information oriented in trying to

present an authentic view of the other, to reconcile the 'strangerhood' associated with new destinations which were opening up around the world.

For the host populations also, there were new demands which required education and training, to increase the satisfaction of the tourists as well as to contain the resistance and conflicts that were emerging from tourism development. 'Demonstration effect' and 'culture shock' were being observed in many countries. As tourist related crimes like theft, eve-teasing, child prostitution and bride buying became more common, local communities began to mobilise against new tourism projects in rural and remote areas of Asia.

Golf courses and beach resorts were the immediate areas of land use conflict, as we see in Goa, Kerala and Bangalore. NGOs like the Bangalore based Equations and coalitions like the Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism began to document and network on educating host communities on the transformation of their lives and the need to gain control.

In the post 1980 period, therefore, the WTO promoted local interaction rather than



*The Double Headed Dilemma*

PIPIN KALNA

enclave or resort tourism; cultural exchange rather than confrontation of cultures, and recommended a more professional approach in marketing tourism both to the guest and the host. However, despite the amount of information on tourism related problems as shown above, the WTO still aimed at bringing down barriers and obstacles to tourism by setting out impossibly high targets for tourist arrivals (5 million for India by 1996-97), and encouraging the lifting of visa controls, customs and immigration regulations and facilitating of transportation and accommodation services.

The Third World Coalition, however, indicated an alternative perspective:

- To focus on the effects of tourism on the people of the third world.
- To increase awareness of the role of tourism in development models.
- To provide a voice to people affected by tourism and to enter as equals in the tourism discourse.
- To understand and expose the unequal exchange that tourism had established between the guest and the host.
- To stimulate and encourage relevant research for the affected communities to be able to intervene in the development of a country's tourism policy.
- To ensure that human rights and justice become a part of the mainstream tourism discourse, since tourism operates within a global system based on great inequality in terms of power, income and resources.

Consequently, even though WTO has supported 'Alternative Tourism' and 'Sustainable Tourism', (see note), activist research has shown how Alternative Tourism has, in fact, a more intensive impact since it results in a more intimate contact between guest and host, as in the case of Jaisalmer (AIDS, drugs, sex) and Khajuraho (pauperisation of the local communities). This is because the host population is totally unaware of the life style and expectations of the guest - and yet, the guest enters into the most private aspects of the host's life. Sustainable

Tourism, dispersed in the mountains and forests, aiming to be environmentally conservative, has also not been an unmixed blessing. The Himalayas are today, the world's highest garbage dump; indigenous people in Gir and Rajaji national parks are being displaced from notified areas and the heritage hotels are bringing 'modernisation' into remote villages where *havelis*, forts and palaces are being remade into luxury hotels for high spending tourists.

In the 1990's, we are going to see much more debate on tourism issues as third world countries get into more and more intensive development of tourism, to adjust to the conditionalities of the IMF/World Bank. Tourism is considered an 'invisible' export and the government hopes that the tourist dollar will one day pay India's oil bill. If this dollar is earned through foreign investment, we will then have to pay

not only for oil, but also pay back the money we borrow.

We will see in this debate, several contradictions, which each region, destination and nation will have to resolve:

- How to think globally but act locally.
- How to benefit communities, not just individuals.
- How to create real benefits.
- How to provide for the future use of resources so that we do not destroy their access to future generations.
- How not to abuse the environment.
- How to involve communities in decision making.
- How to have meaningful exchanges between tourists and resident populations.
- How to create our own tourism models so that the control remains with us.

#### NOTE:

*Alternative Tourism*, as opposed to conventional, mass tourism, promotes destinations far removed and hence, unexposed to modern civilization. The accent is on going 'native', without the frills that are a part of conventional or luxury tourism.

As for *Sustainable Tourism*, some people consider 'sustainability' as a state in which human activity does not exceed the carrying capacity of the ecosystem. Niels Roling, who has authored books on tourism thinks it best to consider sustainability as the result of the interaction between both, the ecosystem and (collective) decision-making.

#### ABOUT OUR GUEST EDITOR

Nina Rao is an M Phil in Political Studies from the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. At present she teaches Tourism at the College Of Vocational Studies in the same city. Nina is on the Programme Committee of Equations, an NGO working on the tourism critique. She is also associated with tourism education in other universities like IGNOU (Indira Gandhi National Open University), universities of Kurukshetra, Garhwal and Himachal. Nina has to her credit a book on Ladakh, published by Roli Books. Earlier she worked with the Department of Tourism at the Govt of India Tourist Office in London. Prior to that she was a free lance journalist and a staffer with *Eve's Weekly*. Nina has published many slides and is interested in travel writing and photography. Right now she is completely committed to developing an alternative tourism policy for India.



# CONVERTING ECO-SLOBS INTO CULTURAL ENQUIRERS

BILL AITKEN

*Tourism is such a negatively charged subject that any ink spilled to discern its winged potential for good, seems like piddling before the Niagara!*

The modern tourist conjures up a gross category of subtle post-colonial exploiter. Fat, foreign and filthy rich, these stereotyped perceptions of the developing nations are but symptoms of a universal distaste for the leisure-bent traveller. Sir Alec Guinness loathes the slim, slight and silent Japanese theatre audience in London just as ardently as we in India despise the beefy, blue-rinsed memsahibs, bulging out of their designer hot-pants at the Taj. Envy of the uncaged existence is bound to provoke the toiling resentment of the daily wage-earner, who fails to see that most of the tourists fall either into the category of the very young, unconcerned with long-term security, or the retired matron, landed with a lump-sum legacy.

The reality, as every serious student of cultural exchange knows, is that there is precious little difference between people of different nations. Thirty years ago, when I set out hitch-hiking across twelve countries to India, the moment of truth arrived at Zagreb, where I discovered I could not distinguish between the notices that pointed to the

ladies and gents toilets. (The fact that I was wearing a kilt hardly encouraged the locals to help me make up my



mind!) But after that initial trauma, the people whisked me off to their village

homes for the weekend, where they danced to an accordion and drank slivovitz, the most marvellous human companionship I have ever encountered, though the assessment was made from under the table, where I had slid in bleary contentment.

From that intensely sensuous affirmation of Balkan animal spirits (so sadly intuned today in brutal ethnic confrontation), I was slung by cultural extremism to Kerman, where friendly Iranian policemen, scuffling about in shoes with their backs pressed down (not by lassitude but devotion), advised me to put up in their police station. The xenophobic Friday crowds welcomed a foreign tourist as avidly as a Spanish bull-ring thrilled to the sight of a red flag. It was weird to compare the laid-back, gentle aura of the genuinely protective custody of my secular hosts, with the hate-filled ranting of the marshalled processionists, for all the world resembling a posse of British football hooligans. Wherever you go,

it is possible to detect a oneness in human behaviour and the first point to be made in converting our low opinion of tourists as slobs and exploiters, to that of winged international harmonisers, is to prefer always the findings of serious observers over the superficial, sensationalist gimmicks of the media. One sentence of considered scholarship is worth more than all the back-packing titles that titillate Western colonial assumptions. There are materially richer and poorer nations, but it is a travesty of the truth to pretend that by virtue of a more organised polity, the haves enjoy a superior culture. While a poor nation in terms of conventional prosperity, India possesses enormous cultural wealth. The nearest the world comes to accepting this reality is in the footsteps of the young, foreign travellers, who feel India, in spite of her allegedly grievous social backwardness, might just possess the one thing that matters

and which material well-being only distances; a sense of oneness with life.



Tourism derives from the "turn" in a circuit of duty (now pleasure) and can be traced to the post-nomadic custom of performing pilgrimage. Those who find it far-fetched to compare the extraordinary privations of Hieun Tsiang and Fa-hien who followed in the footsteps of the Buddha, with today's stampede of North European holiday makers to the beaches of Spain and Florida for sybaritic lazing, need to be reminded that under the veneer of a narcissistic lifestyle is the naked urge to worship Surya, the ultimate symbol of physical and spiritual sovereignty. Rice pudding in spite of all the indignities the western world heaps upon it, remains a recognisable cousin of *khir*.

The most hopeful aspect of modern tourism, that makes all the bad news of environmental damage bearable, is that it enables the common man to see for himself, the condition of a country. It is true that without an adequate cultural background many distortions are liable to be enlarged rather than lessened, but this is the price of an essentially adult-education programme. Illiteracy about alien cultures cannot avoid the initial agonies of learning an indecipherable alphabet. We all instinctively flee to a familiar ghetto state of mind when threatened by strange practices. The world's greatest bores are those whose minds, curtained off by fear, cease effectively to function as enquiring humans. Knowing little of their own religious traditions, these brain-gagged salesmen will forever spout on the shortcomings of some imagined 'enemy' doctrine. They constitute one of life's

*Illiteracy about alien cultures cannot avoid the initial agonies of learning an indecipherable alphabet. We all instinctively flee to a familiar ghetto state of mind when threatened by strange practices.*

most familiar categories, people whose ignorance is dense enough to blind them to the fact that it is easier to teach than to learn. However the more a person comes to know about life the less certain he is to insist 'this is how it is.' Tomorrow you may be wrong again.

Human intelligence is the only resolute weapon to dispel nonsense, hearsay, prejudice and malice about misunderstood cultures. The living religions of the world exist because they answer the particular needs of real people. Until you come to terms with basic realities and accept that everything on our planet has a cause, the journey to contentment is liable to be bumpy and unfulfilling. The tourist is trying very hard to be a continuation of the ancient pilgrim tradition, finding out

(feebly, from the marble of his five-star mausoleum) what makes his host nation tick. We have to see beyond the gross slack of his jowls and the indecent plump of his wife's thighs. They would not dream of offending their neighbours back home in the Mid-West with outlandish dress modes, yet the long flight to the Orient snaps their commonsense barrier. They emerge from their Indian hotel, dressed in the flimsiest of tropical wear that embarrasses the entire Indian landscape. Has this insensitivity come from colonial hangovers, jet lag or plain ignorance of Asian conventions? Their temperate custom dictates that a hot body needs airy dress, but they have no mental understanding of what local dignity expects of visitors.

However, the altruism of the young entrants to tourism rides high, and their minds are flexible enough to admit there are other ways of disposing of snot than stuffing it hygienically in one's pocket. They need to be addressed.

But where are the young to draw their educational inspiration in cultural know-how? Who can explain the Hindu *joota* (rejection of soiled or used food and utensils) system that pervades rural custom, when it hardly yields to an English equivalent? The most needful thing to create the revolution that will turn the tourist slob into an enquiring student of foreign cultures, is to bring back the Encyclopaedists. We need a body of information that the tourist can acquaint himself with, to sound the depth of any particular region.







Encyclopaedias involve a mind-boggling array of information, and surely their usefulness will be nullified by the sheer weight and format of their finish? Well, the good old *Gazetteers* of Indian districts have stood the test of time. Why not make more popular the findings of Census Report Supplements? While British gazetteer pens had ulterior motives of commercial and spiritual aggrandisement in their treatises, our book of Indian culture would simply state the facts and avoid paternalist opinion.

The most crucial input would be the quality of the entries, submitted from devotion to discipline. Only those genuinely concerned to promote the virtues of a subject dear to their studies, would voluntarily submit an article on it. There is no guarantee the editorial committee would accept it nor would any fee be forthcoming. In short, one would have a labour of love. The main body of scholarship would be in heavy, reference format for Government tourist offices, to assuage their astounding level of ignorance. A paperback resume would be available for the ordinary tourist and a selected short-list of do's and don'ts would be obligatory handouts with immigration entry cards.

The sort of book I have in mind would be akin to William Crooke's *Things Indian*, a marvellous, enquiring compendium of subjects great and small that intrigue the passer-by.

Government publications come cheap and good in a variety of disci-

*They emerge from their Indian hotel, dressed in the flimsiest of tropical wear that embarrasses the entire Indian landscape. Has this insensitivity come from colonial hangovers, jet lag or plain ignorance of Asian conventions?*

plines but it is the dickens to get them to sell you one. Guides to the great archaeology sites are available for a song in the Janpath head office in Delhi, but nowhere for a beginner do you find a resume of the very best, must see buildings. Guide book writers seem fearful of announcing their likes and dislikes, and you get a low-key rating that brackets the hell-hole triangle of Agra-Delhi-Jaipur with the transcendently incomparable Badami-Ai-hole-Pattadakal trio. We need more unmealy-mouthed opinion, and the courage to tell people that a week in Hampi, Khajuraho or Bhubaneswar is worth a month of traipsing round the big-yawn palaces of Rajasthan (Jaisalmer excepted).

Left to themselves, tourists get by. Provide them 'liaison officers' (as the Indian Mountaineering Foundation does with foreign mountaineering expeditions) and then the scene really gets

counter-productive. Indian red tape gets laughed at in every mountaineering hut round the world, and at every parish hall, the house is brought down when a slide is shown of a policeman, in the age of satellites, guarding a bridge in the Himalayan states with a fixed bayonet, against a notice that reads 'Photography totally prohibited-including sketching.'

Though the public accepts the state as essential baggage of tourism, Indians should start taking a personal interest as ordinary citizens do, say in Nepal. Until local involvement arrives there seems little point in tittering at official hamhandedness that fits hooks for ceiling fans, in the roof of high altitude bungalows designed for the plains. There is sublime mindlessness in the selling of tourism - and which of us hasn't received a magnificent, official diary (with miniatures) a few days before the year which it was intended to signify, elapses? Sick laughter won't help mend the damage our tourist officials signal, with their continual buffoonery that results from an ad hoc policy. Do we need tourists? Do we want tourists? Too often the answer seems to be that since everyone else welcomes them, we must do so too. My two retired sisters take their blue rinses three times a year to Tenerife, Bangkok, Hong Kong and Florida. My brother and his wife go on regular Caribbean cruises. It is not that they steer clear of India, but just that being professional leisure-spenders, they realise that India is not even serious about wanting their dollars!

The giveaway to the problem was crystallised during the Emergency, when (it is said) Sanjay Gandhi had a wall built round the first village that greets the arrival as he leaves the (old) Palam airport. The sight of buffaloes, *charpays* (cots) and dung cakes would be to overwhelm the visitor, it was argued, a view that illustrates again the suspension of commonsense. Most international flights reach Delhi in the small hours of the morning and by the time the poor tourist staggers out of immigration, the triple trauma of buffalo, *charpoy* and cow-pat are not likely to add materially to his level of agony.

It is not only the tourist who has to be educated about India, but our leaders, who wallow in an inferiority

1835



COVER UP!

complex over what is perhaps our greatest strength, the rural equation with nature. Instead of vetoing the relaxed Indian way of doing things to impress the stranger, we ought to plug such local 'virtues' and sell them as a more meaningful alternative to the western mode of so called progress. For example, instead of stone-walling about delays and inefficiency at airports, we could announce some upanishadic insights, to confirm that India's enduring culture has been based on a feeling for the eternal, rather than be bound by the arbitrary hands of a clock. We all need to be educated about ourselves. The world with its shocks, can open our eyes and reshuffle our fossilised notions of what's the best way forward for civilisation. Most of us, willy nilly, have to be eclectic, taking a bit of modernity with a pinch of traditional values. But we all need access to more information. A manual of culture should not be hard to produce by voluntary effort, for the urgent need is a tool that gives essential definitions and clarifies subcontinental concepts. Just as we can hardly blame the trekking groups, who are forced to hack trees when they cannot find the promised kerosene at the roadhead for fuel, so we should view the misshapen foreign tourist couple, standing out like a sore thumb, as victims of deprivation.

Understanding is really the key to

all tourist endeavour. Unlike missionaries or colonialists, your leisure traveller has an open mind. Don't blame him for it being empty if you don't personally help fill it with useful information. The root meaning of education is 'lead-out'.

The Grand Tour, of earlier centuries, was considered the best way to complete a person of quality's understanding of complementary civilisations.

But the bottom line has remained unchanged, though *Baedeker*, flourishing his stick at the natives, has now been replaced by *Lonely Planet* sharing a joint. "We like you British", intoned a Greek inn-keeper in the early nineteenth century, to a gentleman tourist on a round of the classical sites. The Englishman, imagining he was about to hear of Lord Byron's sacrifice for Attic freedom, was mortified to learn the real reason for the foreign visitor's popularity. "You are so rich", said the

1978



COVER UP!

innkeeper!

India potentially is the world's richest tourist destination (more likely for the traveller). Her cultural *khazana* (treasure) is the envy of all other nations. Will intelligent enterprise sell her civilisational virtues, or mindless fantasies about an imagined golden past, cloud her future with sick communal folly?

There are signs that the corner has been turned. In the confident success stories of the Non-Resident Indian, who has overcome fierce international competition, lie the best remedy to cure the subcontinental sense of inadequacy and the perennial scourge of defeatism. The age-old acceptance of second-rate status in material striving and the traditional negative belief, that slipshodness and corruption in daily life are as inevitable, as excellence in arts and crafts are an immutable heritage, have received a jolt from the intermingling of cultural extremes. Contact with the crude and unsubtle West only underlines the completeness of India's civilisational cycle. Perhaps only those Indians living overseas are aware of the store-house of human wisdom they have deserted for the chimera of progress. It is likely that these foreign-returned 'tourists' to India will be the catalysts for improved standards, rather in the way Mahatma Gandhi, on returning from South Africa, provided an unorthodox dose of salts that gave independence from colonial chains.

*William McKay (Bill) Aitken was born in Scotland in 1934, studied Comparative Literature at Leeds University and hitchhiked overland to India in 1959. He lived in Himalayan ashrams, worked as private secretary to a Maharani and has written about his passionate affairs with India's sacred rivers, mountain goddesses and steam locomotives. He has trekked the breadth of the Himalayas and ridden its length from Darjeeling to Khardung La on an old motorbike. He has also covered the whole metre gauge rail from Ledo to Tiruchendur. Now an Indian citizen, he is Hon. Librarian of the Himalayan Club. He is the author of *Seven Sacred Rivers*, *The Nanda Devi Affair*, *Mountain Delight*, *Exploring Indian Railways and Travels by a Lesser Line*.*

*Illustrations: Ripin Kalra*

The Tamil Nadu District Highways and Rural Works Department (DHRW) wants to convert an existing coastal road in bad repair into a double lane highway, three or four times increase in width, half a metre rise in height and realignment in several sections. The scheme, if fully implemented, will result in the displacement of hundreds of families and the felling of 6000 age old trees. This 'improvement' is felt necessary for the 'development' of the coastal region.

The project is named 'improvement to East Coast Road'. Much of the confrontation is centred on what constitutes 'improvement'. But this is not just a semantic debate. That the project has been termed just an 'improvement' is quite strange for a road costing over Rs. 50 lakhs per kilometre.

Only after INTACH (The Indian National Trust For Art And Cultural Heritage) and others raised objections, and the Madras High Court stayed tree cutting (in Dec. '92), did the DHRW prepare an Environmental Appraisal Report to get clearance from the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MEF). This report is revealing to a discerning reader: its dreams of 'development' are alarming for those who know the coastal situation.

The planned highway is supposed to connect Madras with Kanyakumari, a distance of 737 kilometres, passing close to the shore line. The existing coastal road is a pothole pitted, partly single and partly double lane, meandering along the coast and through nearly fifty villages. Its present carriageway width is lined with shade-

giving banyans, tamarinds and neems, which often give way to the palms and beaches of the famed Coromandel coast. Its proposed replacement, however, is a double lane highway with a uniform 10 metre wide carriageway on raised embankment, built to National Highway standards, which will destroy or seriously affect over a thousand homes, as well as schools, temples and tanks.

Clean earth, air and water are essential to support life, and the reason why we break environmental problems down

into three primary categories—air pollution, water pollution and loss of natural habitat. The East Coast Road (ECR) project seriously threatens all three.

Field surveys carried out in coastal villages have shown that the majority of the people are seriously concerned about the negative impacts of a major highway and the ensuing development, namely, the salination of their groundwater and soil, pollution, noise and the inevitable increase in traffic accidents. Also,

they realise that a major highway is not guaranteed to bring direct benefits to the local population. Apart from some mechanical workshop and tea shop owners, the sort of major developments envisaged are only likely to benefit outside industrialists and entrepreneurs.

INTACH made a thorough analysis of the cost-benefit figures, which form the basis for the Asian Development Bank (ADB) loan sanction and has concluded that it is not an economically feasible project. The ADB's own Operational Manual states, "...environmental impacts must be incorporated into the valuation of the benefits and cost in the economic analysis of projects".

However, when INTACH first approached the Tamil Nadu Government in September 1992, nearly forty kms.

of the first phase (of which 28 kms. are now cleared by MEF) had already been cleared of trees, and work was in progress.

A highway along the coast between Madras and Cuddalore is no longer necessary, now that the Madras-Villupuram highway (NH45) which runs within 30 kms. from the coast is being converted to a four lane super highway. INTACH has suggested, with future tourism potential in mind, to marginally widen and resurface the existing coastal road to serve local needs.

The Tamil Nadu coast is extremely rich, scenically and culturally. It has long stretches of unpolluted beaches, the magnificent World Heritage Site of Mahabalipuram, its Nature Conservancy areas such as Point Calimere, Kaliveli Tank and the Gulf of Munnar Biosphere, its unspoilt villages, backwaters and sacred groves and its places of special interest like Pondicherry, Tarangambadi and Chidambaram.

The coast and its inherent attraction could be devastated by laying a highway through the area, leading to heavy traffic (about 10,000 trucks a day) and pollution due to industrial urban growth. Does this actually enhance tourism? And does tourism mix with industry?

A scenic route is what tourists enjoy, not a dangerous highway full of roaring trucks, racing buses and deadly accidents. Has the Tamil Nadu Tourism Department thought of providing mountain bikes on hire so that people could cycle all the way to Kanyakumari, enjoying the quiet and unspoilt pristine beauty of the coastal landscape? Is it not the kind of tourism we should be thinking of now?

The latest development is that the Asian Development Bank has decided to review the whole ECR project including environmental issues. The project has already been opposed by NGO's on the ground that it will endanger the coastline in every way.

**For more information contact:**  
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*Ajit Koujalgi is an advocate representing the INTACH Chapter of Pondicherry in the East Coast Road issue.*  
*Courtesy : The Hindu Sunday Magazine (16.1.1994)*





# CAUGHT 'NAP' PING!

## TOURISM POLICY AND LAW

USHA RAMANATHAN

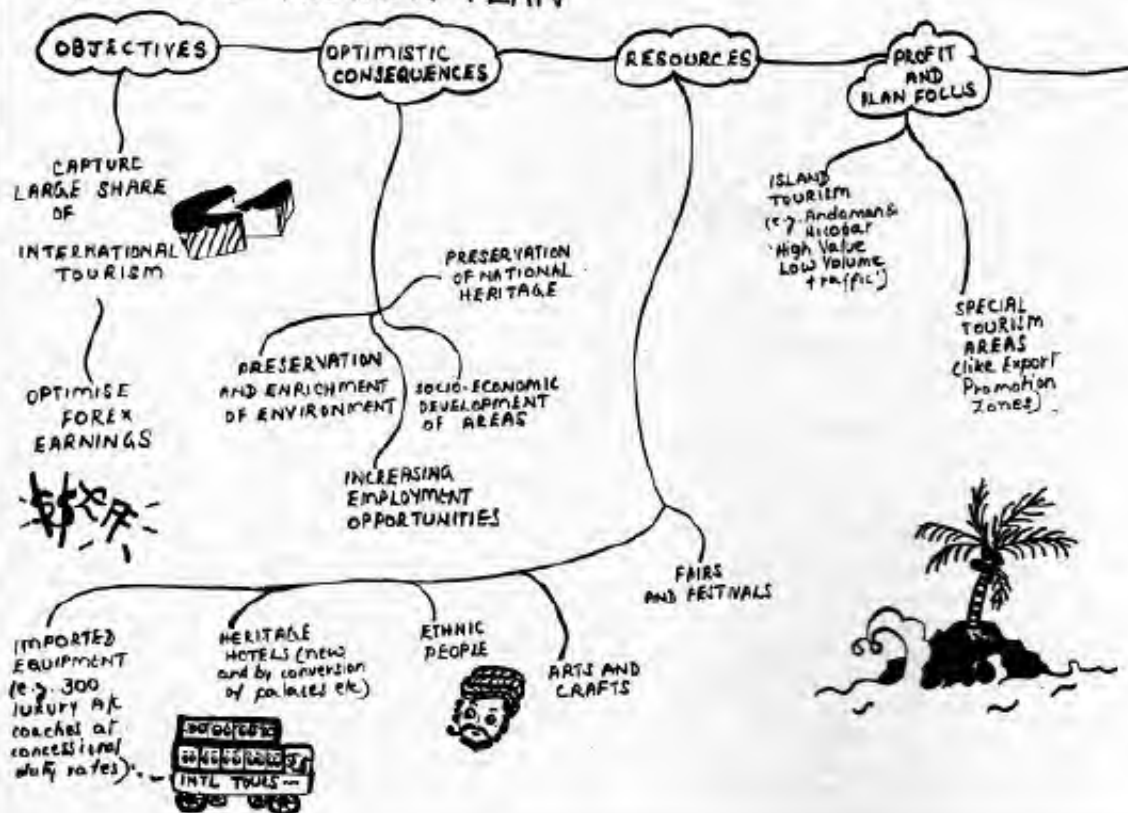
The National Action Plan (NAP - see chart below) was announced by the government of India in May 1992. 'Tourism' the NAP begins, 'has emerged today as the fastest growing industry in the world'. In the context of the New Economic Policy, liberalisation, globalisation and the market economy, the emphasis of the NAP is on selling India to the tourist, and consequently maximising its envisioned commercial potential. Tourism is not governed by any specific laws, except in the area of taxation - as in the reduced Expenditure Tax, to make it more attractive to the tourist - or in the form of subsidies for tourism related activities, or in the 'open skies' law. Giving tourism a priority (as does the NAP), does however change the complexion of other laws like the Forest (Conservation) Act, the Wildlife Protection Act or the Environment (Protection) Act - these laws were enacted to further the cause of

conservation, but with the tourism focus diverted to accommodate the tourist. Or consider the constitutional protection to tribals whose ethnicity the NAP counts upon as an encashable resource.

The NAP is itself a policy and is a product of the executive, unlike law which needs enactment by a legislature. It is a plan of action with no sanctions attaching to it. While courts are comfortable sitting in judgement over matters of law, they tread carefully around policy issues. The forum for debating and resolving issues arising out of policy is therefore nebulous. Public interest litigation has provided a partial answer.

What the NAP sets out to define constitutes the explicit half of the picture which concentrates on national concerns. What is left unspoken is the other half - the common person's concerns. It is this that is illustratively dealt with in this article.

### NATIONAL ACTION PLAN





This is a tale of priorities and perspectives.

There was a time when the welcome accorded to a traveller was a sign of civilisation. As the centuries rolled by, and larger and larger

number of smaller and smaller self-absorbed states emerged, the traveller was a subject for scrutiny and suspicion. As war and mass destruction gave a new meaning to peace and international amity, the traveller was an ambassador between cultures, on a journey that would foster understanding.

It was then that a Global God emerged from His regional confines, to engulf an essentially inequitable world. This God was Market Economy, which then became the imperative faith of states, and the provocateur of panic among peoples. Consumerism was the reified deity; and indebtedness the instrument of control.

In this new world order, the traveller across boundaries assumed a variety of

forms. The business traveller was a distinguished visitor. The refugee a burden, and sometimes a political embarrassment. The immigrant was a mixed bag, while the labourer was to be tolerated. Then there was the student, the relative seeking his family, the army hand (with the finger on the trigger), the diplomat, the ministerial carpetbaggers, the intellectuals, the paparazzi... and... the tourist.

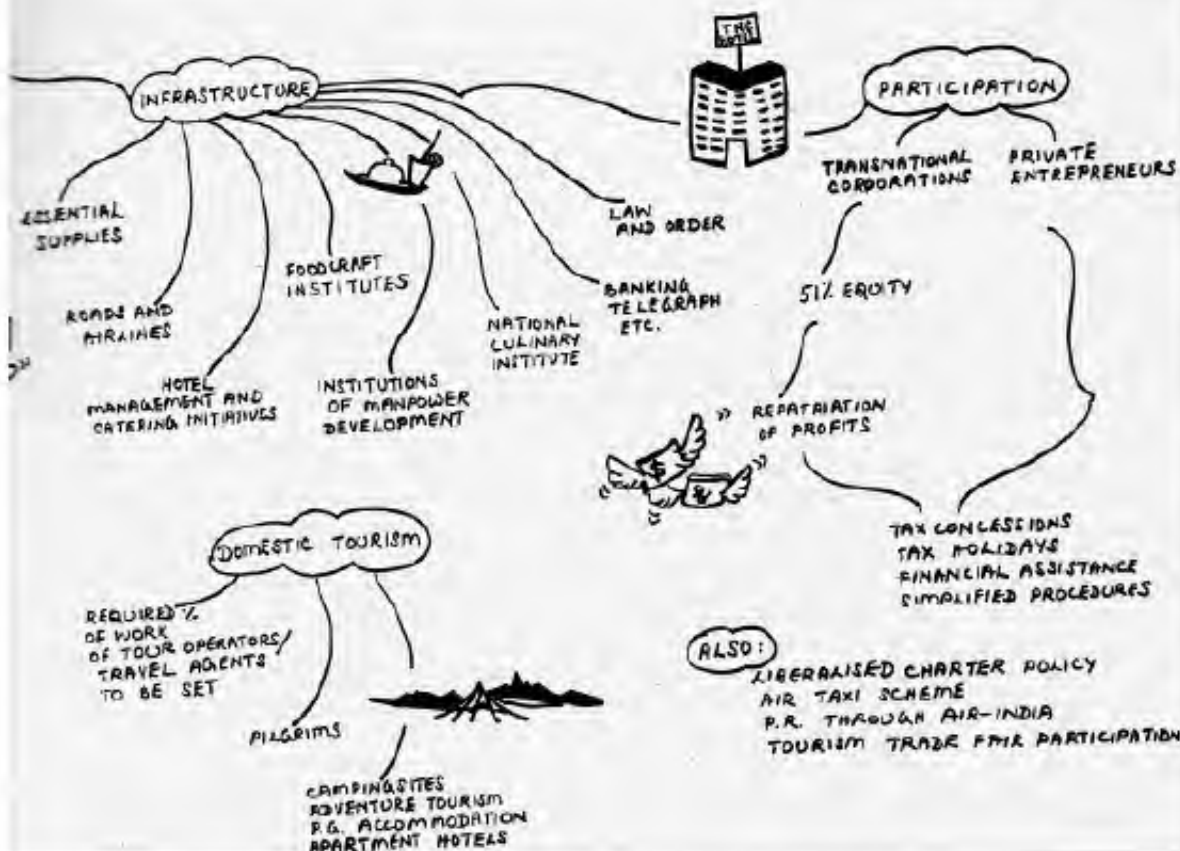
The world in the meantime, had been restating nations' and peoples' identities; and it was now made up of the Debtors and Creditors; the Aid Givers and the Receivers; the industrialised nations, the oil-producing countries and the rest of the world...

The modern tourist, the traveller for pleasure, moved about among his own kind, the rich and the wealthy, in the careful comfort of the known. The unusual adventurer ventured beyond his country to explore lands of less understood, (ergo no), civilisations. Out of this truth of circumstance, a dream was born. A dream that would create a

credible paradise of plenty in the mystique of misery; that would tempt with promises of the familiar, a window of free access to quaintness and its synonymous ethnicity. The dream dwelt upon the dollars cascading into capacious coffers, and in that moment all else was forgotten.

From here on the story separates into many strands, bearing common testimony to a displacement of humanity, and the enthroning of utility.

The scene shifts to India where the state is caught NAP-ping on Tourism (meaning, of course, the National Action Plan). The rules of this game are determined by the object to be achieved. The stated ambition is to enhance foreign exchange earnings. A new calculus therefore emerges which, with the help of revisioning, reduces the significance of human, environmental and cultural costs till they fade into nothingness. Other objects and imperatives dwindle out of executive existence. Tourism as an industry is accorded a priority, and the rules are bent a little,



flexibilised and elasticised till the original form, purpose and intent are all but lost. To illustrate out of obscurity:

Environment consciousness has raised the curtain on eco-heritage - a call to preserve and foster nature, and conserve species diversity. Concerted care has led the state to provide pockets of pristine from which the destruction of the everyday world is excluded. The law has manifested its activism in the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972... Relatively ancient laws such as the Forest Act, 1927, have been invoked to lend a priority to conservation, and, in that cause, to expel natives of the soil. So it happens that when a sanctuary is created, the biological and zoological species are assiduously cultivated and the integrity of the ecosystem is disturbed to a minimum. As a part of this exercise, it is seen as unavoidable that local people whose life, livelihood and homes inextricably intermingle with this habitat, are deliberately displaced and excluded from access to this protected area. This in the cause of conservation, which was recognised as being of the utmost importance for the life of the planet, of the people, of existence itself.

The wheels turn, and a new priority replaces the already old. The rights of the tourist are to gain precedence, and all the organs of the state have to be activated to ensure this. The forest which is to house and nurture nature's bounty is to be made habitable for the visitor.

So it came to pass that the Parambikulam reserve forest in Kerala was declared to be a wildlife sanctuary in 1962, and with the efflux of time and memory, a forest lodge was constructed within. Since reordering of priorities of the state is often dissonant with its ordering by parts of its citizenry, there was opposition, which wended its way, in a petition, to the courts. The voice of the dissidents spoke of the delicateness of the ecological balance. The felling of trees, the clearing of space, the building of a lodge, would all involve human interference in a region from which its original inhabitants had been evicted.

The existence of the lodge would increase vehicular traffic and so would pollution, and affect adversely the character and ambience of the sanctuary.

The state, before the court however, had its heart with, and its eye on, the paying visitor. 'Necessary conveniences and amenities', it said, 'have to be provided to the public who are interested in the serene environmental preservation (sic) and to enjoy nature's bounty'. The emphasis had clearly shifted from eco-conservation to eco-tourism. Therein lies an unexplained optimistic consequence (see chart) that the NAP tersely presumes - that tourism holds a key to preservation of the environment with not so much as an

*In the tourism explosion that is the NAP aspiration, it is permissible to restate logic and unseat reason. Or so it appears from the experience of the battle to safeguard the Goa coastline.*

apology to the displaced.

The NAP is attracted by another resource of possible tourist interest: ethnicity (see chart). This would mean making a spectacle of our people - their simplicity, naturalness, differentness - and converting them into profitable commerce. An example may serve to illustrate the assault on their dignity.

On a Saturday morning, turning the pages of a national daily newspaper, an article entitled *Licence to Marry* strikes the eye. 'Break a twig - and get divorced' rouses our curiosity promising a tale of 'Bani, where women change husbands every decade'. Interested, we read on. As an anthropological study, a sociological phenomenon, a statement on the status of women, it draws our attention. The narrative describes their song and dance which knows no sadness. An average resident can marry

upto six or seven times 'not to mention pre-marital or extra-marital relationships'. This is followed up with an account of the entangled physical and emotional relationships within the community. Importantly, particularly in the context of what comes later, the economy of Bani is 'largely self-sufficient' and the use of currency limited. There is an insidious reference to a serpent in this 'paradise' in the form of venereal diseases.

The shock is reserved for the last. Having identified this self-reliant isolation, a concerted plot is revealed to exploit its commercial potential. To monetise this unspoilt habitation, the article ends with directions of how to reach Bani, and of where to stay once there. One is not left wondering for long who is converting into capital the life, customs, simplicity and dignity of our people: it is an article written for the State Tourism department!

In case we are left believing that the case of Bani is an aberration, consider another advertisement which invites you to 'come, discover Orissa' where 'you have the unspoilt Orissa where tribals reside, retaining their age-old customs and values'. The constitutional guarantee to protect and preserve the identity and life-style of our scheduled tribes seems entirely forgotten. It is an unvoted-upon repeal of what constitutes a dignity and life-giving part of our fundamental document.

Another shuffling of priorities: Tanks are the life-line to many rural communities which depend on this store of water, accumulated when the rivers flood into these reservoirs. Executive policy and unimaginative laws have led to their disuse, siltation and often into virtually irreparable decline.

This has left communities water-hungry. Efforts to revive this system have assumed importance and a few tanks in the Bangalore agglomeration were given to the forest department by the revenue department to restore them to life. In this vital area of development has emerged an incongruous proposal - that the tanks be handed over to voluntary organisations to be developed and maintained as tourist spots!

Tourism has managed to find its justification and survived in Goa. In the tourism explosion that is the NAP



aspiration, it is permissible to restate logic and unseat reason. Or so it appears from the experience of the battle to safeguard the Goa coastline.

The issue was of the construction of resorts on the Goan beaches. In the early 1980's, when degradations to the coastline worried the administrators, a policy decision determined that construction within 500m from the high-tide line be prohibited. The tourism emphasis brought changed focus. Concern for the fragility of the coastline was to give way to the immediate capitalisation of coastline commerce.

Ramada Inn, an international hotel chain, sought to construct a beach resort within the 500m mark. And the government of the day gave them the nod. Environmentalists launched into action to reassert the need for the 500m policy. When governments do not listen, one option is to approach the courts. The government is less likely to ignore a court verdict than it is to acknowledge the legitimacy of public protest and action. Yet, courts may be unprepared to look beyond explicit statements in the law or in statutes. This is what

*The wheels turn, and a new priority replaces the already old. The rights of the tourist are to gain precedence, and all the organs of the state have to be activated to ensure this.*

happened in the court battle for preserving the Goa coastline.

'It must be borne in mind that the limit of 500m from high tide line was initially proposed by the former Prime Minister and those directions had neither the authority of law nor of any statutory provision,' the court said. 'The fiat was issued with a view to protect the environmental and ecological balance near the sea beach... Various states and specially those having large beaches made representations to the central government and it was realised that to encourage tourism it is necessary and

desirable that beach resorts should be at a distance which is not far away from the sea. The Government of India thereupon decided to relax the restriction beyond a limit of 200m from the high tide line, but this relaxation was not applicable all over India but only to those beaches which attracted tourists...' Did we hear the NAP say 'preservation of environment'? (see chart)

The disparate strands converge to speak the unspoken in the tourism policy. Monetising and converting into commerce have avoidable fallouts which the policy does not even begin to address. The inhumaneness of discriminating against the HIV+ traveller is one side of the coin, with the Bare India campaign launched by Air India to attract the tourist as the other.

This was not a tale directed at the visitor to our land. It was a rendition of the State's re-interpretation of hospitality as a no-holds barred industry. ●

*Usha Ramanathan is a research scholar with Delhi University, working on legal processes*



# TATA TEA LIMITED

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Calcutta-700 020

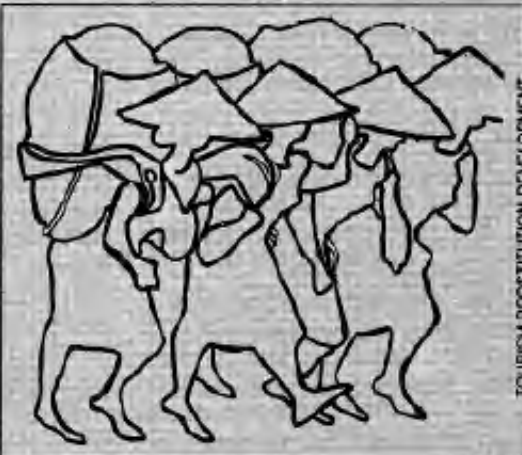
## TOURISM AND PROSTITUTION

Whenever the question of tourism in the third world is debated, there is an almost inevitable discussion on prostitution. Tourism and prostitution, one may argue, are two separate issues. However, studies of many countries like Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, Kenya etc, which have made tourism a major industry,

have shown such a phenomenal growth in prostitution, that the link between tourism and prostitution can hardly be avoided. Because of these close links, we now have terms like *Prostitution Tourism* or *Sex Tourism*.

Before we understand why prostitution grows in third world tourist destinations, we have to distinguish between prostitution due to tourism and prostitution that existed in 'red light areas'. Prostitution in red light areas exists in most patriarchal societies. This type of prostitution is based mainly on the availability of women from poorer sections of society. Loss of agricultural land, bonded labour, debt etc, has forced thousands of women from rural areas to come to towns and cities in search of jobs. The urban areas offer these women work either as domestic servants in the so called informal sector or as prostitutes. This abuse is of poor rural women by richer urban men.

Prostitution or Sex Tourism takes place in similar economic conditions. However, it is on a much larger scale and it now involves the



TOURISM PROSTITUTION DEVELOPMENT

abuse of people from a poorer nation by people of a wealthier nation. It is mainly in South East Asia that the sex component in the tourism industry has become structural. And it is no more a 'women's issue'. We see today that not all prostitutes are women and girls and not all people who use prostitutes are men.

And then there is the question of pedophiles (people who have sex with children). The demand for children has created a huge market of both boys and girls, mainly in Sri Lanka and South East Asia. Since AIDS, the historic and devastating disease of the century is transmitted by large scale prostitution, the demand is on for virgin girls and boys not yet likely to have caught the AIDS virus.

The issues of sex tourism go far beyond the question of personal morality. It will be naive on our part to blame the prostitutes alone. It has to be understood that prostitutes, male, female and children, are victims of an unequal and oppressive society in which imperialist, racist and sexist attitudes play a big role. ●

BROTHEL  
OF  
EUROPE

JEREMY SEABROOK

*'The national bourgeoisie organises centres of rest and relaxation and pleasure resorts to meet the wishes of the Western bourgeoisie. Such activity is given the name of tourism and for the occasion will be built up as a national industry... the national middle class will have nothing better to do than to take on the role of manager for Western enterprises, and it will in practice, set up its country as the brothel of Europe.'*

**Frantz Fanon**  
*in The Wretched of The Earth*

*'Selling a fourteen year old girl has become so commonplace, it is banal'.*

**TIME Magazine, June 1993**



**L**in-Lin sells roses on the streets of Malate, the sex district of Manila in the Philippines. The roses she sells, red, orange, yellow, are destined never to open properly, but to wither before they bloom. Lin-Lin is 19, but she deliberately starves herself so that she will pass as a child. For Lin-Lin's real business is with prostitution. Like her rosebuds, she is stunted in perpetual adolescence, so that she can be repeatedly sold as a virgin to the sex tourists from Japan and USA. This elective malnourishment contrasts with many of the young people of Manila, who cannot get enough to eat.

Ansook is in her mid-twenties. Until recently, she worked in the bars of Bangkok. Now she has been diagnosed HIV positive. For five years, she says, with the poignant nostalgia of a 25-year-old who knows that the greater part of her life is over, I had a good time. I made big money. I sent money home to my parents, who thought I was a waitress. Now I cannot go back. I cannot tell them the truth.

The Government of Thailand has depended for a great deal of its foreign exchange on the sex industry, and the attraction which this holds for Westerners and Japanese. It has brought many people to Thailand who were unable to find the satisfactions they sought in their own society. The rich Western market economies, which appear to offer everything, could not, apparently, assuage certain needs, answer or respond to deep human yearnings which appeared to be catered for in Thailand. Many of those who came here over the past two decades came because they wanted women who were compliant, yielding, 'feminine', in a way that they believed Western women no longer to be. This happy trade in 'invisibles' contributed significantly to the Thai economic miracle. Unhappily, the lucrative sex industry is now being transformed into an AIDS industry, which, it is estimated, will cost the Thai government up to ten billion dollars a year by the turn of the century.

This may well serve as a paradigm for the model of development which so many countries of the South are now following: Ansook, the daughter of a rice farmer, comes to Bangkok to search for work, so that she may augment the family income. Being without



*Ansook's contribution to the economy of Thailand is highly conspicuous: she earns dollars and yen, which benefit her family just a little, but bring even greater rewards to the pimps who control her, the bar-owners and brothel-keepers and the manufacturers of the drinks which her clients consume.*

qualifications, indeed, barely literate, the only scope is as an 'entertainer.' For a few years, all goes well. But when she discovers that she cannot work any longer, she has no other choice than to return home, in spite of her protests. When she goes back to her village in

Isaan, the impoverished North-Eastern part of the country, covered with shame and humiliation, she has to confess the truth to her family. Contrary to her fears, they do not reject her, or turn her away. They enfold her within their comforting embrace, tend and look after her.





THE HOLIDAY MAKERS

*'The Third World is the brothel of industrialized countries' (F. Fanon). Sex travel is the most inhuman form of tourism, the worst exploitation and humiliation. But it's roaring business. Some tour operators act as pimps. And they go unpunished.*

Her sisters and elderly mother cherish and minister to her in her weakness and debility. They are there when she dies. Ansook's contribution to the economy of Thailand is highly conspicuous: she earns dollars and yen, which benefit her family just a little, but bring even greater rewards to the pimps who control her, the bar-owners and brothel-keepers and the manufacturers of the drinks which her clients consume. But the costs of her suffering are all borne by the family itself: the unbearable pain of her sad decline, the sorrow of returning home, used up at the age of 25, the burden of looking after her, are not borne out by the long-forgotten urgencies of the male desire she once served, but by the already impoverished family. None of this shows up in the GNP, the profit and loss account of Thailand's balance of payments. The real costs of such malignant patterns of 'development' are lost to view, carried by those who have already to bear intolerable poverties and insufficiencies in their lives.

Umma was sold by her teacher, a man her family held in great respect, to a brothel-owner in Bombay in the sex-district of Kamathipura. She was kidnapped while on her way home from a private tuition session, by an accomplice of the teacher, drugged and transported to the brothel where, the very

next day she was offered to a wealthy habitue of the high-class establishment, which caters to the privileged of the Gulf, men who come to Bombay ostensibly for medical treatment, but in reality for more frivolous and clandestine purposes. Umma's brother and his friend came to Bombay, and spent two years searching for her. By the time they finally located her, she no longer wished to return home. She had become accustomed to the life of luxury which she was able to lead, even though she remained in captivity; a state of drugged dependency upon all that the money she earned could buy. Umma is now seventeen.

Rosalia was already 40 when she went to Japan as a 'dancer.' She had gone to one of the many agencies recruiting the entertainers, women who are exported on short contracts from the Philippines to Japan, where they serve as part of the non-monetary wage re-

#### EXTRACT FROM AN INTERVIEW WITH CHANTIWIPIA APISUK, OF EMPOWER, IN BANGKOK, AN ORGANISATION THAT WORKS WITH THE SEX WORKERS OF THE THAI CAPITAL.

##### JEREMY SEABROOK

**'W**e have been working with women in the bars, clubs and parlours of Patpong since 1985. More and more women are entering the entertainment industry. It requires no training, no skills. Many of the women left school at the age of 12 or 13. Skilled labour goes into the foreign-owned factories. The unskilled come to Patpong or Pattaya.

Women and men are equally poor in the rural areas, but men have more opportunity in the cities - construction, driving, industry. Their earning power is higher. Surveys show that 60% of factories pay women less than the minimum wage. It is easy for them to move into the sex industry. EMPOWER helps women to take some control over their lives - literacy, negotiating with bar-owners and customers,

dealing with banks and other institutions of society. We discovered that it is not only formal education that was needed, but sexual education about AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases. Since 1986, we have created an AIDS educational programme. We produced a leaflet for women, specially telling them how to minimise the risks to themselves. To protect themselves: it is not a question of not giving AIDS to men.

'The rules of bars, brothels and



We are in the presence of vast unmet needs, unfulfilled desires and unsatisfied longings that cannot be attained by those installed in the very heart of the universal hypermarket of consumerism. In part, their purpose is the very spread of the same discontents and chronic dissatisfactions which goad them. In a way, they become the symbols of the western way of life; their mysterious purchasing-power, their money, the effortlessness and ease with which they glide across beaches, mountains, countryside, through jungles and cities, make them the perfect icons of a culture whose inadequacies they are trying to escape from. To the people who service them, in Goa, Phuket, Rio, Penang, they appear powerful, desirable, a model for emulation and aspiration. They are the missionaries of the 'western way of wealth, even though their very presence in these places is evidence of all that is destructive and diminishing of tormented humanity in the heartlands of privilege. They are the bearers of the universalising impulse which has never deserted the west, ever since its earliest colonial, piratical excursions 500 years ago. What a paradox, that those impelled by a sense of the deepest inadequacies of their own culture, should parade through the world as the very emissaries of that same wounded, uprooted civilisation and its desperate desire to escape from its own absence of meaning.

*Jeremy Seabrook is an internationally well known writer. He was educated in Cambridge and the London School of Economics. He writes for The Guardian and The Independent and is the author of many books, including The Leisure Society (1989) and The Myth of the Market (1990). He travels extensively in Asia.*

## EXTRACTS

### FROM TIME MAGAZINE'S REPORT THE SKIN TRADE, JUNE, 1993

Few corners of the world are immune to the burgeoning sex trade... Half the peep shows in the 'capital' of Europe are now staffed by East Europeans... One skin trade network, investigated by police in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany, lured 9000 women from Latin America and Asia as well as Eastern Europe into prostitution in West Europe and cabarets between 1985 and 1991.... In Asia, the sex trade has long operated on an industrial scale. In the 1960's and '70s, Japanese men flocked in organised sex tours to Taiwan and South Korea; later on, they preferred the Philippines and Thailand.... The sex trade sprouts inexorably in new areas. In Ho Chi Minh City by one report, the number of prostitutes has recently increased from 10,000 to 50,000. Morocco has become a mecca for Saudi sex tourists. And last year, attesting to the growth of market economics, more than 240,000 people engaging in prostitution were arrested in China. Sex tourism takes on ever more ingenious guises as well. Arabs are flocking to Bombay, a center for inexpensive medical treatment for such common ailments as blood pressure or skin infections - excuses to stay a week or month and patronise the brothels that have sprung up around the hospitals.... Public concern over the flesh trade is rising. Last year, Pope Paul II expressed 'horror over the degrading practice of sex tourism'. In Karachi, human rights lawyers are mobilising opinion against rackets that have kidnapped 200,000 Bangladeshi women into prostitution in Pakistan. In Negombo, Sri Lanka, a recent mecca for European pedophiles, Catholic priests staged protest marches until embarrassed authorities agreed to combat the trade. The issue has been debated recently in the Swedish, Danish, Swiss, British, Thai and Cypriot parliaments.

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# CHASING DREAMS

## TOURISM AND

### THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

NINA RAO

**T**he global dimensions of tourism have worried not only Indians but people all around the world. They have been aware, since the sixties, of tourism being what George Young called both a blessing and a blight. The text of tourism in the third world is often read without its international connections and we are making a first attempt to place the **National Tourism Action Plan (NAP)** in the context of India's **New Economic Policy (NEP)**.

The NEP aims to create a liberal economic environment, which means that the market will be the decisive force in determining the flow of investments in our economy. And the reason that we are giving this primacy to the market is that we want to integrate the Indian economy with the world economy, so that capital moves without restrictions, determined by market forces. What this really means is that if there is a market for potato chips and soft drinks, then more investment will flow into the processing industry rather than agriculture because the market has no social obligations like feeding those below the poverty line or providing drinking water to rural areas.

In a market economy, the tourism plan would also reflect the demand-centred model of international tourism, which earlier was never wholly accepted by India's tourism policy makers. Whereas the tourism policy of the eighties emphasised the role of domestic tourism for national integration, the NAP of 1992

emphasises new facilities for foreign tourists whose numbers are set at five million arrivals per year. As such, both the structure and agency of tourism in India has been transformed.

This plan (NAP) outlines nine travel circuits and six travel destinations as the sites of intensive tourism development, as against our previous approach which promoted India as a tourist destination. But perhaps more structurally interesting is the concept of STA's (Special Tourism Areas) which are in line with the World Bank conditionalities imposed on third world countries who are developing export oriented

economies, to help solve the problem of their credit-worthiness as well as their balance of payments. The structural adjustments in the Indian economy begin with a removal of subsidies on

TABLE:1A  
INVESTMENT BREAKUP 1991

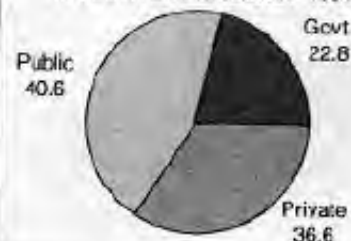


TABLE:1  
TOURISM: BREAKUP OF INVESTMENT

(RS. IN CRORE)	Govt.	Public	Private
International air capacity		8500	
International airport		1000	500
Domestic air capacity		1000	3000
Railway network	80		20
Road network	1500		50
Road transport system		30	320
Integrated development of tourist centres	3300		
Monuments	150		
Pilgrims	100		
Hotel rooms			3850
Restaurants			330
Convention/			
Conference facilities	300		100
Shopping complexes			1300
Entertainment & information			
Counters	33		70
Manpower	70		
Tourist facilitation services		50	
Protection of tourists	10		
Regulation & incentives			
Promotion & marketing	400		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5943</b>	<b>10580</b>	<b>9540</b>

Source: Economic Times December 1993

food, fertilisers and petroleum products, but given the export orientation, they demand subsidies for an 'invisible' export like tourism. (See Box A on page 34 for details). Under the GATT agreement 1) Certain export subsidies are prohibited, for example, direct subsidies to a firm or an industry contingent upon export performances, 2) Currency retention scheme which involves a bonus on export, 3) the provision by the government for imported or domestic products or services for use in the production of exported goods, on terms and conditions more favourable than those used in the production of similar goods for domestic consumption, 4) the full or partial exemption, remission or deferral of direct taxes or social welfare charges, specifically related to exports. It appears to be a strange paradox that on the one hand, the



# Fiscal Incentives/Concessions Declared by the Government of India

## Income Tax Rebates

1. A) Under 80 HHD of Income Tax Act, 1961, income attributable to foreign exchange earnings of the hotels 50% is exempted from Income Tax straightaway and the balance 50% is also exempt if reinvested in tourism industry.

B) Approved hotels functional after 31.3.1990 but before 1.4.1995 are eligible for Tax Holiday deductions under 80 IA.

## 2. Depreciation

The hotel buildings are eligible for depreciation at the rate of 20% with effect from 2.4.1987 (Assessment year 1988-89). Furniture and fittings used in hotels have been allowed a higher rate of depreciation of 15% against the general rate of 10%.

## 3. Interest Subsidy

Hotel Projects 1-3 star category are eligible for an interest subsidy of 3% on the entire loan amount. Hotel projects in specified areas and Heritage Hotels are eligible for 5% interest subsidy. No interest subsidy is available for 4 and 5 star hotels and other hotels in the four metropolitan cities of Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras.

## 4. Liberalised Exchange Rate Management System (LERMS)

Hotels, travel agents, tour operators and other organisations connected with tourist trade are not covered under LERMS. Authorised dealers can release foreign exchange for business visits, participation in Conferences, Seminars, Training etc. Prior approval of Department of Tourism is not necessary. Facility to open and operate Exchange Earners Foreign Currency (EEFC) Account extended to hotels, travel agents, tour operators, etc. Under the scheme, 15% of inward remittances in foreign exchange can be credited to this account and utilised for specified purposes.

The purposes for which EEFC account can be utilised include travel abroad, expenses for foreign hospitality, participation in trade fairs/

exhibitions abroad, advertisement publicity, promotion, market studies, publication of brochures, folders, etc. agency commission, service charges, fees payable to foreign technicians and any other payments including imports subject to regulations.

## 5. Imports

Capital goods, raw materials, components etc. can be imported without any restriction except to the extent such imports are regulated by the Negative List of Imports. Import of special items required by hotels, restaurants, travel agents and tour operators permitted against a licence on the recommendation of Director General of Tourism. Recognised hotels, travel agents, tour operators and restaurants are entitled to such import licences upto a value of 10% of the foreign exchange earned by them during the preceding licensing year.

## 6. Concessional Customs Duty

Customs Duty on specified items has been reduced to the level as applicable to project imports provided the goods imported are required for substantial expansion of the hotels. This includes equipment for kitchen, health club, laundry, housekeeping, energy saving devices, etc.

Equipment for Adventure Sports can also be imported on a concessional rate of duty.

Priority consideration is also given to approved projects in allotment of construction materials like, cement and steel and for telephone, telex and LPG connections.

## 7. Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) Scheme

Import of capital equipment (including spares upto 10%) by Hotels and Restaurants, Travel Agents and Tour operators, for which payments are received in freely convertible currency, is allowed at a concessional rate of customs duty of 15% subject to an export obligation four times the CIF value of the imports. The obligation is to be fulfilled within a period of 5 years.

government assures these concessions to the private sector for investment in tourism and on the other, it signs the Uruguay Round agreement which bans such export subsidy. So, one can only arrive, therefore, that these regulations will be broken to favour private foreign investment. The STA's are notified territories where tourism development will be seen as an invisible export and would involve removal of restrictions and relaxation of regulations to investors, both private and foreign. The travel trade would also be encouraged to focus their promotions around the facilities



TABLE 2  
FOREIGN EXCHANGE  
RECEIPTS FROM TOURISM  
(In \$ million)

YEAR	RECEIPTS
1989	1433.2
1990	1528
1991	1310
1992	1414

ties to be developed in the STA's to ensure profitability. Some of the features of STA's are:

- Income tax rebates
- Interest subsidies
- Concessional customs duties
- Removal of import restrictions
- Depreciation
- Export promotion capital goods scheme
- Liberalised exchange rate management system.

(See Box A for further details on the above).

Different regions in the country would be encouraged to establish STA's and already, Kerala and Tamil Nadu have identified Bekal and Muthukadu as promising sites for such development.

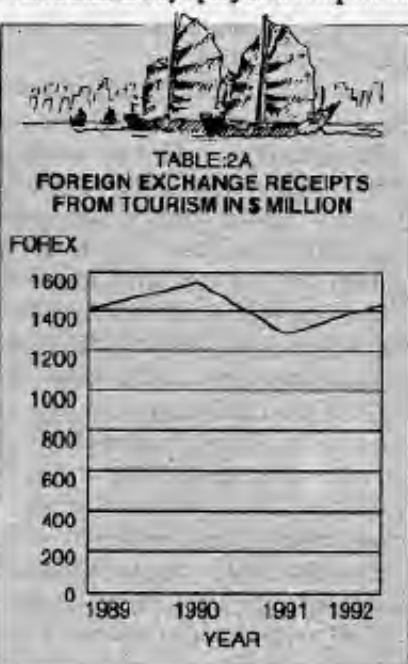
In the past, the government had been the primary agency for tourism development. Today, the government has transformed the nature of its intervention to providing the infrastructure for

national and international entrepreneurs to set up luxury hotels, private airlines, tour operators, travel agencies, banking, insurance and other goods and services that may be required to achieve the targets we are now setting for tourist arrivals. Secondly, the public sector which had always played an important

prised of four hotels each, which included one five star hotel making a profit, one hotel at a premier tourist destination also making a profit, one loss making hotel and one hotel in a remote destination. Seven international companies bid for these bundles, but the executives and employees of ITDC resisted these sales because the price set for this disinvestment was well below the actual value of the property, land and assets. Indian Airlines and Air India were also on the block but there was stiff resistance from their employees to the sale or disinvestment of these airlines. Instead of disinvestment, the Air Corporation Act has now been amended to allow scheduled operation of private airlines. Perhaps the government has forgotten the report of the IIPO (Indian Institute of Public Opinion, 1980) ordered by the FHRAI (Federation of Hotels and Restaurants Association of India), which states that the private sector considers the hotel industry to be a high risk industry and would like to invest only in hotels in the metros, and not necessarily at tourist destinations where the infrastructure is poorly developed.

Apart from the reach of tourism services, we also have to look at the clout that foreign investors are going to have, now that the Dunkel drama is over. The far reaching impact of the Dunkel Agreement in the service sector covers banking, insurance, telecommunications and tourism. As a consequence of this agreement, a country like India will have to lower its immigration barriers to those with advanced professional skills and consultancy services and technological clout. What this means is that even our large hotel chains and tour operators will not be able to compete on equal terms with multinational companies in air services, accommodation, surface arrangements and even management and planning of tourist destinations. For example, no Indian consultant really stands a chance on surveying the Bekal STA. In fact, the consultants' names are a closely guarded secret and several well known development planners (who prefer to remain anonymous), have already indicated that they are in a crisis situation, given the number of foreign consultants being called in to determine destination plans.

The NAP states that the aim of the new tourism policy would be to encourage private investment, both domestic and foreign. However, this is not new. From the third Plan onwards it



*Indian Airlines and Air India were also on the block but there was stiff resistance from their employees to the sale or disinvestment of these airlines.*

*Instead of disinvestment, the Air Corporation Act has now been amended to allow scheduled operation of private airlines.*

developmental role in the tourism sector is also being relegated to the background and the private sector is being brought in a dominating role.<sup>4</sup> For example, the ITDC (India Tourism Development Corporation) which set up accommodation units to provide Western style services to tourists at locations ranging from the metros to the most backward regions of the country, was to be dismantled and sold off to the private sector or to foreign investors, to raise funds as a part of the disinvestment of the public sector scheme of the government. Three bundles of twelve ITDC hotels were put on the market, com-

TABLE 3  
TOURIST ARRIVALS IN INDIA

	1989	1990	1991	Percentage change	
				90/89	91/90
North America	174638	166422	153502	-4.7	-7.8
Cent. America	9018	10573	11819	17.2	11.8
West Europe	572752	571413	514541	-0.2	-10
East Europe	58243	56127	48073	-5.3	-17.9
Africa	61667	60750	62127	-1.5	2.3
West Asia	121792	112383	118530	-7.7	5.5
South Asia	535981	520248	590621	-2.9	13.5
South East Asia	82767	87911	78966	6.2	-10.2
East Asia	77098	78911	67793	2.4	-14.1
Australasia	40296	40805	30535	1.3	-25.2
Grand Total*	1735252	1705546	1674537	-1.7	-1.8

\*Excluding Stateless Tourist  
Source: Dept. of Tourism



was always hoped that the private sector would surpass public investment in tourism services and the public sector would play a purely developmental role. It is due to the failure of the private sector to play its role that the public sector was forced to enter the tourism industry, so that India could provide 'standard facilities' to incoming tourists. Despite exemptions from expenditure tax, ten year tax holidays and automatic approval of foreign investment in equity up to 51%, we have failed to attract foreign investment in the hotel industry in special areas and in specified destinations. The role of the government, as the NAP asserts, is to 'conceptualise and deal with policy issues'. A committee of secretaries has set out 'policy issues' to mean a Rs.26,000 crore investment in tourism in the current period, which would attract both the private sector and foreign investment in the tourism sector (See Table 1 & 1A).

If anyone reads between the lines it will be noticed that between 1989-92, receipts from tourism in dollar terms have been almost stagnant (See Table 2 & 2A). It is not surprising that the private sector is not interested in investing in tourism. Secondly, given the fact that tourist arrivals from the high spending markets have also been significantly lower than in 1989, we can understand why tourism is the least attractive option for any investor, both domestic and foreign (See Table 3).

We are often told that there is no alternative to the NEP and the example of the 'Asian Tigers' is frequently put before us, particularly those who have mortgaged their economies for a growth rate, rather than improving the living standards of their people. For a comparative assessment of the tourism performance of some of these countries, we can take Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong, Maldives, Indonesia and Taiwan (See Table 4). It is inter-

TABLE 4  
TOURIST ARRIVALS IN ASIAN COUNTRIES  
(in millions)

	1991
Malaysia	7
Nepal	0.65
Singapore	6.7
Thailand	6.3
Hongkong	7.1
Japan	3.6
Philippines	1.6
India	1.7
China	1.9
Maldives	2.1
Pakistan	0.59
Sri Lanka	1.1
Indonesia	2.87
Macau	1.5
Taiwan	2.4
Mongolia	0.46

esting to note that in the year 1992, most of these countries were not able to maintain the number of tourist arrivals, which, in the case of Malaysia, went down by two million. So, we can see that tourism is not a stable economic option. Neither can tourism infrastructure be rapidly adapted for alternative use in

case of a drastic drop in tourist arrivals.

In Indonesia and Thailand there are already anti-tourism movements, organising to overturn intensive development. Singapore's Prime Ministers have always claimed that Asians don't understand democracy and they have gone over the heads of their people to develop Singapore into the world's biggest shopping plaza.

We can, therefore, legitimately claim that the examples put before us have not really provided the answers that we need. In fact, the WTO's (World Tourism Organisation) forecast for the year 2000 (See Table 5) indicates a growth rate for the Asian region at 21.9% in terms of tourist arrivals and 30.5% in terms of receipts. However, India has not been able to realise the WTO's expectations in the decade of the nineties. The NEP and the NAP are yet to get off the ground as far as tourism is concerned. What we do have already in place is a hard hitting critique of both the NEP and the NAP, which is the result of activists in the field, collecting data and information and evolving alternative policies at the local as well as the national level.

We felt it was important to highlight some of these issues as an expression of the resistance to plans that exclude debate and participation.

(With inputs from an article by Byasdeb Dasgupta in *Equations* AN Newsletter)

TABLE 5  
WORLD TOURISM MARKET



Year	Continent	Arrivals(%)	Receipts (%)
1960	Europe	72	57
	Asia & Oceania	2	4
	America	24	36
	Africa	2	
1989	Europe	62	50
	Asia & Oceania	15	20
	America	20	27
	Africa	4	Decline
1990	Europe	63.4	54.4
	Asia & Oceania	14.4	17.6
	America	18.8	26.1
	Africa	3.4	1.9
2000	Europe	59	39
	Forecast Asia & Oceania	21.9	30.5
	America	20.1	27.8
	Africa	5	2.7

Source: WTO Study

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# The Dilemma of Cultural Tourism in India

A.G. KRISHNA MENON

*Of all the tourism resources that India possesses, cultural heritage is perhaps the one resource it has in abundance. Any nook and cranny in this country has a tale to tell or a building to admire. Cultural accretion over the centuries makes India an unique destination for heritage tourism. Both the government and the tourism industry have recognised this potential, and the last decade has witnessed substantial development in this segment of the tourism market. Yet, this is only the tip of the iceberg, because vast areas of the country have not yet been opened to the tourist gaze. When this happens, it will unleash forces more cataclysmic than the foreign invasions that have periodically transformed our society since the dawn of civilisation.*



The role of tourism, particularly the modern version of mass tourism contributing to changes in society, is bound in a complex construction of economic activities, social change and cultural transformation. Jost Krippendorf categorically asserts, 'whether we like it or not: modern tourism has colonial characteristics - everywhere and without exception'. If that is the opinion on the influence of general tourism, then cultural tourism, by its very nature, is more deeply implicated. Since India is increasingly relying on the strategy of developing its potential for cultural tourism, it is necessary to take a closer look at its practice.

In 1968 Dr. E.R. Allchin, UNESCO expert, made a study of India's tourism potential, and established a broad categorization of its cultural heritage. He divided the monumental heritage into four principal subject groups: a) Buddhist monuments b) Hindu monuments c) Indo-Islamic monuments and, d) monuments of European and British association with India. He advised that each deserved to be exploited for purposes of cultural tourism. Subsequent Indian tourism policy has followed this advice.

He went on to categorise the types of visitors, identifying separately, the pilgrims attracted by each category of monument: a) visits of Indians domiciled abroad b) the Buddhists from Japan, Thailand, Sri Lanka and other countries with a Buddhist heritage and c) the smaller, but growing number of Americans and Europeans who are interested in the religions which are practiced in India. Today, pilgrimage tourism, especially the Buddhist circuit, has become an important segment of the tourism market.

Dr Allchin also identified 'natural heritage' as part of cultural heritage, because of the 'educational character of the interests involved'. The tourism policy has exploited this potential and today, trekking and game sanctuaries are amongst the fastest growing segments of the tourism industry. The report went on to define the importance of traditional arts and crafts and

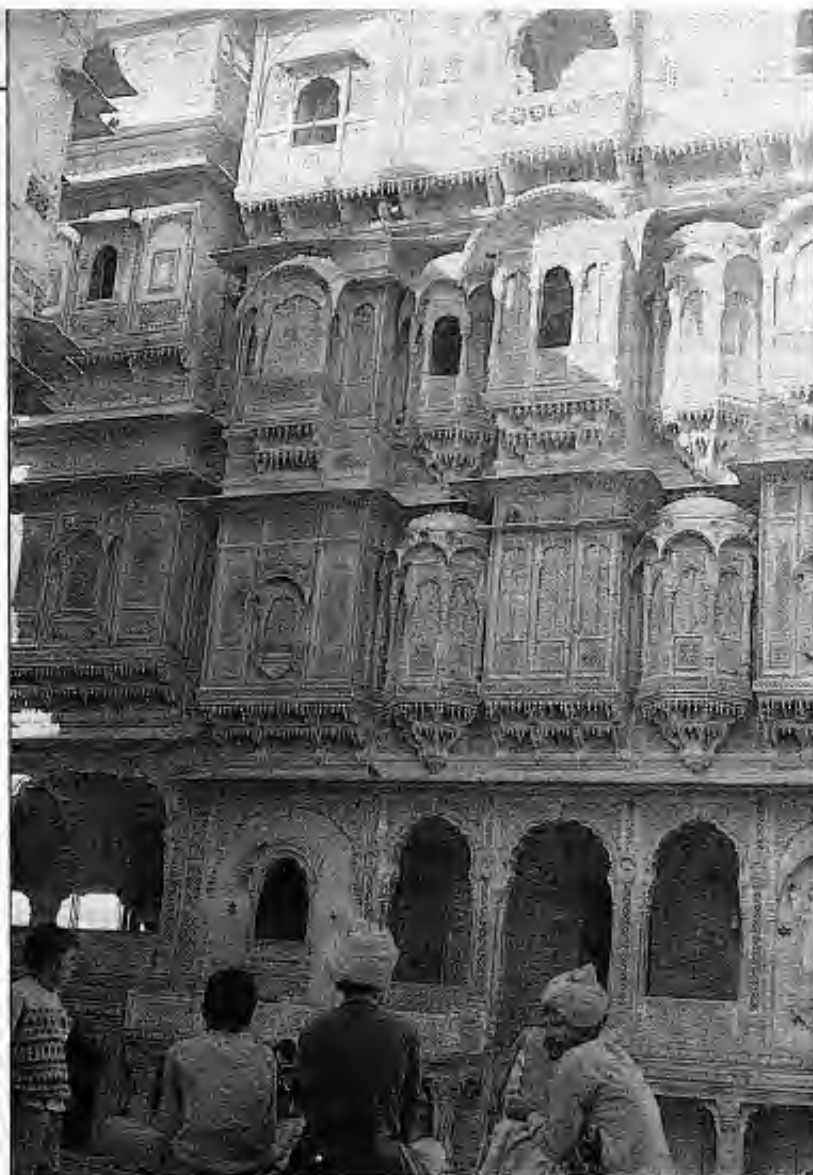


*Jaisalmer - the Golden Citadel is under tremendous pressure on account of increased tourism activity. Besides the harmful effect in the fort itself, inflation, drugs and urban squalor have increased.*

the potential for 'cultural shopping' of different types of Indian handicrafts and handloom works; the performance of music and dance; and finally, quite interestingly, 'gastronomy' as a 'cultural heritage' for the tourist who is 'strong minded and persistent enough to overcome the values of what we may call the hygiene barrier and break through the prevailing Indian 'stew and cornflakes' barrier.

Dr Allchin's report firmly established the role of cultural tourism in the strategy of tourism development in India and reinforced the commonly held perception of India as primarily a cultural destination. We find that this has been one part of the mind set governing tourism policy in India.

The other part of the mindset is clearly evident in the obsession the policymakers display for increasing foreign exchange earnings through the promotion of tourism. All the pious concerns for 'socio-economic development' notwithstanding, the tourism policy of the government is almost entirely predicated on this criteria. Thus, we find in practice, tourism in India is more considerate to the welfare of the foreign tourist than the well-being of the local population. Not surprisingly therefore, there is increasing evidence in tourism literature that the general social and economic well-being of society deteriorates with increasing tourism. Effects of this phenomenon can also be gauged by the protest movements mounted by grass-root organisations, for instance, in Goa to actively campaign against tourism development. Thus, we are confronted with the great dilemma of cultural tourism in our country: the most abundant tourism resource may be unexploitable. Why is this so? There could be several readings of this situation, but one reading concerns the right of the collective - the government - to arrogate to itself the power to exploit local cultures. This backlash of popular sentiment is, of course, part of a world-wide trend towards local self-expression and promotion of local cultural identities. Any policy which is perceived to threaten or compromise these local identities is fiercely resisted. Inevitably, cultural tourism is perceived to be such a threat by local



A. G. KRISHNA MENON

*Parwaon Ki Haveli, Jaisalmer. The photograph is taken from a place where another haveli stood. It was demolished to facilitate viewing by tourists.*

societies.

Another reading could be that strategies for the development of tourism which are constructed top-down, are often perceived to be inimical to local interests - no matter whether they are or are not, actually so. Again, we can cite a similar world-wide trend towards political decentralisation which could be the reason for local people protesting implementation of centrally conceived tourism projects. Such problems are particularly acute in the area of cultural tourism because when the destination is defined by the life-style of the people living there, then these cultures are unique to begin with and the impact of tourism is more easily apparent.

There could be several other reasons why cultural tourism projects run

into problems. What I would like to suggest is that it has to do with the nature of our culture: it is a living culture. Understanding this important difference in the characteristic of our culture, while dealing with the Indian situation, throws more light on the dilemma of cultural tourism. The significance of this characteristic is not easily apparent to foreign consultants like Dr Allchin, whose expertise is derived from an understanding of European cultural experiences. This difference does not strike most Indians either, because we too are schooled into seeing our culture as Europeans see our culture: the paradigm of culture is considered to be universal, and local cultures like the Indian situation is seen as a colouration of the universal scheme. But that there is a differ-



ence at the paradigmatic level becomes clear to anyone who works in the field; I gained this insight quite slowly, working on the conservation of historic cities when I realised that I was not dealing with an inanimate work of art, but with a living entity: with people for whom the artifact had real, contemporary significance. What all this amounts to is the manner in which we deal with 'dead' artifacts and 'living' entities.

The categorization of monuments by Dr Allchin merely separated stylistic types of buildings. They need to be further differentiated as monuments with 'observer' interest - or, those which are still functioning entities. Monuments like the Lingaraj and Jagannath temples in Orissa, or the Brihadesvara temple in Tamil Nadu are obviously monuments of 'participant' interest, different from other Hindu monuments like Konarak or Belur and Halebid, which are monuments of 'observer' interest. Even historic cities like Varanasi, Ujjain and Srirangam can be identified as cities of 'participant' interest.

Monuments not in use are monuments of 'observer' interest, and can

*Exploitation of tourist destinations like Goa and Jaisalmer do not succeed in spite of the fact that they desperately need to be developed to improve the quality of life of their inhabitants.*



*Khajuraho is entirely promoted on the basis of these erotic sculptures. Yet, they constitute less than 5% of the sculptures visible, let alone the importance of the temples themselves. Consequently, the rich diversity available in the Bundelkhand region is neglected.*

be dealt with differently, like the Taj Mahal and the Ajanta and Ellora caves. Dead cities like Fatehpur Sikri, or predominantly non-pilgrimage cities like Jaipur or Udaipur too, can be identified as cities of 'observer' interest, though here, we can get into problems because they are in fact 'living'

cities according to other parameters.

The difference between monuments of 'participant' interest and those of 'observer' interest are not so critical in other ancient cultures, because cultural continuity has been broken, and sharp differences do not co-exist simultaneously. The relationship that the modern Egyptians, Greeks, Mesopotamians, Aztecs or Chinese have with their own ancient monuments is different to the relationship Indians have with theirs. Witness the crisis which enveloped the country on

account of certain 'disputed' structures and the status of monuments that did not even exist at that time in Ayodhya. Or consider the hornets' nest which was stirred when the Jagannath Temple in Puri was to be repaired for necessary structural consolidation by the Archaeological Survey of India.

Such sentiments are not aroused on account of Roman temples having been converted into Christian churches. Repair works can also be

carried out on the Pyramids or the Parthenon without hurting local sentiments. Yet it is only the ancient monuments of Greece, Rome and Egypt, which are primarily of 'observer' in-



RIPIN KALRA





terest, which provided the model for developing theories of concept and practice of conservation which are taken to be an 'universal' in the West; it did not have to contend with monuments of 'participant' interest as we need to in India. The universalisation of this selective understanding of cultural heritage has been a common theme in the explication of our cultural history. The universal model was transposed on the complex Indian scene initially by European scholars like Fergusson, Percy Brown and Havell, and later by consultants like Dr Allchin contracted by the government to give 'expert' advice.

It is because India still has a continuing 'living' culture, that the subject of cultural heritage bristles with profound ambiguities, and consequently adds complexity to a tourism policy that focuses on it so centrally.

Under the circumstances, we can understand why the exploitation of tourist destinations like Goa and Jaisalmer do not succeed in spite of the fact that they desperately need to be developed to improve the quality of life of their inhabitants. Such exercises result in tragic consequences: they get caught between the squalor of poverty and the squalor of pretence. Such tragedy cannot be mitigated by emphasising the gains in terms of foreign exchange - however important that gain may be to the national exchequer.

What happens at the larger urban scale can also be seen to happen at the level of individual monuments. Thus, it is with concern that one observes the systematic transformation of traditional *havelis*, forts and palaces into 'heritage' hotels - the latest policy initiative of the government to boost 'cultural tourism'. This concept also derives from the cultural model derived from understanding the needs of monuments of 'observer' interest. As a consequence, when buildings which still retain meaning and cultural force for the local people, are converted for tourism purposes as 'heritage' hotels, they naturally create problems for the implementation of the tourism policy. The restorers desecrate living relationships and traditions, often, ironically, in the name of preserving those



NINA RAO

*Do we have any view on heritage aesthetics?*



A.G. KRISHNA MENON

*The Khajuraho temples viewed from the swimming pool of a five star hotel.*

*Witness the crisis which enveloped the country on account of certain 'disputed' structures and the status of monuments that did not even exist at that time in Ayodhya.*

traditions.

So far we have only dealt with two issues relating to the problem of cultural tourism: first, that the concept of cultural heritage as applied in the

Indian context is inappropriate; and second, as a consequence, any initiatives in this area are naturally detrimental to the well-being of the local culture or society. A third issue is

addressed by Edward Said in his recent book, *Culture and Imperialism*. He views culture as practices that have relative autonomy from the economic, social and political realms. When it becomes State policy it 'differentiates 'us' from 'them' almost always with some degree of xenophobia ... now the trouble with this idea of culture is that it entails not only venerating one's own culture but also thinking of it as somehow divorced from, transcending the everyday world. Culture conceived in this way can become a protective enclosure...' We can see this debilitating process at work in the various made-for-tourist cultural *melas* like the Goa Carnival and the Desert Festival of Jaisalmer.

With this background, the position of culture in the process of cultural tourism can be viewed as both protagonist and victim, at once so strong and pervasive as to have survived millennia and yet so vulnerable to encroaching alien forces unleashed through modern tourism. The greater tragedy of this situation is that tourism in a developing society such as ours is really the thin edge of the wedge of modernism. Indian society and culture need to develop and modernise, and must indeed reconcile with the forces of modernity. In the absence of other development initiatives, tourism is often - in places like Jaisalmer and Goa, Shimla and Ooty - the prime agent for economic, social and cultural change. It becomes a matter of great concern, therefore, if tourism were to accomplish this adjustment by transforming the essence of 'Indianess' in order to achieve any degree of success. Obviously, there is need to re-think the proposition and make the imperatives of local cultures determine the parameters of tourism strategy, rather than the other way around as it is done at present.

Seen in this light, the formulation of the tourism policy becomes a daunting challenge, one that cannot be accomplished by marketing one's cultural asset at the whim and will of a marketing strategist (quite often an advertising agency) or calibrating its success on the basis of economic parameters such as the quantum of foreign exchange earned. Tourism policy



RISHI KALRA

must be developed with greater consideration for ground realities and its impact on local cultures. It needs to be formulated by interdisciplinary teams of social scientists - including economists and marketing strategists, rather than the present team of generalist administrators relying on 'foreign' expertise.

It is on account of such 'foreign' expertise that India's tourism policy reacts to foreign demand rather than

cater to indigenous needs. It is 'demand led', and strategists seek to emulate 'foreign' models to meet this demand. The models they have in mind are such 'successes' like the beach resorts of Bali or Thailand, and of course, Disneyland. Unfortunately, this overt bias to follow foreign models substitutes as tourism policy.

This process of servicing foreign needs on *their* terms recreates old colonial structures in the relationship between the visitor and the host community and bears out Krippendorff's assertion mentioned earlier. Culturally loaded images are casually used in tourism promotion literature to entice foreign tourists: Rajasthan is 'martial', Khajuraho is 'romantic' and Goa is 'fun, frolic, festivals and feni'. The tragedy that such insensitivity can result in is evident in the state of the tourism industry of South East Asia - a 'success' at the financial level, but an unmitigated disaster at the social and cultural level.

Policy makers will have to resolve the dilemma of cultural tourism through the practice of equitable and ethical strategies. The development of such a policy in India need not and should not, be a requiem to its cultural identity and well being. ●

*A.G. Krishna Menon is a well known architect. He has undertaken a number of conservation projects and written extensively on them. At present he is the Dean of Studies at the TVB School of Habitat Studies, Vasanti Kunj, New Delhi.*

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# LURE OF THE HEAVENS

## An Architectural Design Competition

*What should one do with old monuments? Should they be converted into private 'Heritage Hotels' merely to accommodate rich tourists or put to participatory use by the local people? The following piece is about an interesting experiment carried out by a progressive school of architecture in Delhi and the implications of such a venture.*

Delhi has over 1300 odd protected monuments. They are generally not in use but under the protection of the ASI. Some are maintained well (eg. the Qutab Complex and Humayun's tomb), while others are in a state of disrepair, perhaps due to paucity of funds or just lack of concern. It is conceivable (though against the existing legal framework) that these monuments could get a new lease of life through sympathetic and compatible reuse. Several questions arise, but one could begin to dialogue in this direction, to examine the virtues of this proposition.

A short, one-week Architectural Design Competition was held at the TVB School of Habitat Studies, New Delhi during the second week of March '94. This competition was open to the Fourth Year students. The brief was simple: the adaptive reuse of an out of use, neglected monument, leaving scope for total freedom to

designers in terms of design decisions. The monuments were Begumpur Mosque, Vijaymandal in Begumpur Village and the Khirkee Mosque in Khirkee Village, all of them in Delhi. Out of eighteen entries, one from each of the sites was selected as outstanding. The jury consisted of an eminent panel: Neena Nehru, Ramu

Katakam, Badri Narayan, Kimti Lal and was chaired by Ashish Ganju.

*Lure of the Heavens*, the winning entry was presented by Nitin Gupta and Frederick Ribeiro for Begumpur/Vijaymandal. It was commended for innovative concept and sensitive handling of a historic monument within an urban village.

The proposal of these two students was to create an Astronomy Park. Their purpose was to increase awareness and popularise the science of astronomy among amateurs and interested individuals throughout Delhi.

The location of the site at a slight elevation gives it an unhindered view. The accent was on completing a ruin

rather than adding to it, by building only on existing foundations. All 'new' structures were structurally independent and built with contemporary architectural vocabulary instead of echoing the past.

According to the jury, the proposed reuse is bold and transforms this isolated monument into an urban level facility. The new and the old have been set up in a creative, dialectic relationship of high quality.

The practice of conservation is unfamiliar to professionals and lay



Vijaymandal. Inset: Elevation A

people alike. There has been a lot of debate over the subject of conservation in recent times between social activists and practising professionals. There is much confusion over the terms, preservation, restoration, reconstruction and adaptive reuse.

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) gives guidelines to practitioners on the various approaches to conservation. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), however, adopts John Marshall's conservation manual written in 1924. This has also been adopted by INTACH.

The current debate involves the opinions of the purists who believe that monuments should be restored with minimum additions and the liberalists who believe in stylistic additions.

Nitin's and Freddie's project has adopted the more liberal and 'international' view through contemporary, adaptive reuse of old monuments.



Begumpur Mosque. Inset: Elevation B  
The Elevations of the Astronomy park





## MONUMENTAL TAMASHA

PREMOLA GHOSH

Recently, Delhi was the venue for two festivals - the Qutab Festival organised by the Sahitya Kala Parishad and one at Hauz Khas, organised by Delhi Tourism. Both presented well known dancers and musicians attempting to place, what is now, a vibrant, living tradition, in a historical and romantic perspective. In a nutshell, they aimed to create a romantic ambience to titillate the appetites of tourists and others.

In the past decade or so, festivals centering around well-known historical sites have become fairly popular. There are dance festivals at Khajuraho, Konark and Mahabalipuram where the country's best dancers are presented. Much prestige is attached to these events. Be that as it may, we need to examine the use of historic monuments for such purposes.

On the day after a performance at the Hauz Khas monument, we were shocked to see the confusion of chairs and litter within the enclosure. Nearby

were some thatched stalls set up by the Bistro Restaurant where the night before, local food had been sold to the audience. The Hauz Khas monument was built by Firuz Shah Tughlaq in the 14th century and is therefore a fragile building which can hardly cope with the building of a temporary stage, lighting, sound and an unruly traffic of people. Moreover, distinguished artistes are invited to perform in conditions which are hardly commensurate with their talents. The audiences too are more interested in the 'atmosphere' rather than in the performance which tends to get distorted by badly fitted microphones. The outcome is disastrous, as in a single evening, both an art form and a historic site are battered!

It is necessary to consider very seriously if the combination of classical dance and music with a major historic site for the sake of 'atmosphere' is wise. Perhaps it would be better to treat the two as separate entities. If a medieval monument lends glamour, then Delhi is teeming with unknown buildings one of which could be reused imaginatively as an auditorium, taking care to provide a decent stage, acoustics, lighting and seating. The presentation

would then automatically become more professional and therefore an ideal venue for India's finest artistes to perform in. A restaurant could be opened nearby to provide local food, fulfilling more practical needs particularly for all night performances. This would reduce the *tamasha* element which has become the main ingredient of our cultural lives.

Much has been done for the revival of classical art forms in India and there is a growing audience for this. Therefore, as it comes of age, we should begin to treat it with respect and not indulge in a variety of gimmicks to cater to the lowest common denominator. I think television is already an adequate transmitter of this! It is hardly necessary to kill a culture by going all out to attract hordes of people, as the Indian classical style is less spectacle based and is more intimate, flowing from artiste to audience and vice versa. As for the major monuments, which too are our heritage, surely they could be allowed to exist undisturbed by the sounds of dance and music and let their own architectural grandeur speak for themselves? ●

*Premola Ghosh is Programme Officer, India International Centre, New Delhi.*

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*The shortest way to oneself leads around the world. - Hermann Graf-Keyserling*

# TROUBLE IN PARADISE

## An Update on Goa

FREDERICK NORONHA

*Arriving from England (as half of the tourists do), when you're stuffed to the gills with Christmas pud and thai post, or pre-Christmas gloom, Goa acts as an immediate spiritual Alka Seltzer. Here the trees are covered in thick, lush tropical green, brilliant flowering hibiscus and bougainvillea are in bloom... palm trees... doing their classical 45 degree angle, lean along the beaches... and the temperature is a constant tension-reducing 31 degrees C. More prosaically, with £1 fetching a colossal Rs. 35, you can experience wealth - for a short time at least.*

*- Vicki Mackenzie, British travel writer*

*There is a world of difference between glossy brochures and the lives of real people. And a world of difference in the choices we are in a position to make.*

*- J. Lobo, tourism activist*



Goa today is known for more than sandy beaches and pleasant holidays. Over the past few years, India's tiniest state has also come to be known for protests over the problems caused by tourism. What has gone wrong?

From the mid-eighties, luxury hotels have mushroomed along the 105 km. coastline. Large scale projects, backed by politicians, began coming up amidst charges of bureaucratic-political corruption.

In the meanwhile, protests have grown from citizens groups, environmentalists, women's groups, villagers, the Catholic Church, fishermen and toddy tappers. Many of these protests have not been understood, or deliberately misunderstood outside Goa.

### Displacement of Local People

'Private property. Trespassers will be prosecuted', says the untidily scrawled signboard. Drawn below it is a warning skull-and-crossbones sign. This case comes from Naqueri-Betul, where the Goa government is thinking of acquiring a few thousand square metres of land for a luxury hotel's golf course project. Such projects are the target of the wrath of villagers who

detest the takeover of the land they depend on, for projects of dubious utility.

A little understood aspect of Goa is that this state is not a large city, as is widely believed, but is made up of a few towns and a number of outlying villages. Land is still a vital resource and villagers need large areas to take care of their basic needs - for paddy fields, cattle grazing, coconut groves, housing and so on.

One factor which has aggravated the antagonism towards major tourism projects has been the use of antiquated, British colonial-designed land acquisition laws by the State Government to take over land for such luxury projects, as empowered by law. Sometimes acquisition proceedings are not resorted to, but the threat to use them is wielded as a weapon to make villagers sell their land cheaply. NGO research and investigative journalism in this area have established that villagers standing in the way of hotel managements have been threatened and beaten up by *goondas* (hired thugs). In Agonda, local community restaurants and family-run tourist accommodations have been burnt down, villagers have been prevented access to electricity supplies and drinking water supplies have been diverted to luxury hotels.

### Social Changes

Critics of tourism in Goa claim that the state has had to pay a high price for promoting this industry by way of a boost to hard drugs, local gangsterism and prostitution. There is now the relatively new phenomenon of male prostitution or gigolos owing to the large number of single, unaccompanied Western women travelling to Goa. And with prostitution comes the spectre of AIDS. Tourism researchers have expressed fears that as a tourist receiving state, true AIDS statistics will be hidden for fear of a drop in tourist arrivals.

Another criticism levelled against the government and the tourism lobby is in the area of culture, where new images are created merely to 'sell Goa to their clients'.

Take for instance, the Carnival. This has for long been a simple festival, one of popular participation, which involved a number of small clubs and village groups. It has now been turned into an official celebration over which sponsors spend huge amounts and draw publicity mileage. Many Catholics in the state, with whom the festival is linked, have, in recent years, expressed hurt and displeasure in the way the Carnival is celebrated. It has been blamed for having been vulgarised and turned into a spectacle mainly for tourists, one which projects a misleading image of Goa as a hedonistic paradise where anything goes.

### Economics

Tourism's growth in Goa has led to the spiralling of prices, sending the cost of food, housing and other basic necessities shooting upwards in parts of Goa.

At the same time, tourism has not lived up to its much touted promise of generating productive employment and a higher standard of living. Spanish academic Asun Garcia, who has done research on tourism, noted with shock that many hotel employees were paid for one month's work, less than a day's room rent in their hotels. It is true however, that many youngsters still prefer to take up low-paid hotel jobs even if their traditional occupations offer higher earnings, since hotel or factory jobs are viewed as a means to break with the low social status accorded to fishing or agriculture.

### Tourism and Local Psychology

A curious fall out of the growth of the high profile, luxury tourism industry is the deep sense of inadequacy and impoverishment it has engendered, however unwittingly, among local youngsters. These young people see foreigners and wealthy Indians enjoying themselves in their villages and would like to imitate their lifestyles. But of course, they cannot.

A sort of 'economic apartheid' also operates in these exotic enclaves. Since foreign tourists have the capacity to spend much more than domestic tourists, there have been complaints from the latter that they face discrimination seemingly because of the colour of their skin. The reasons are obviously more economic in nature, but they tend to take on racial overtones.

*It has been estimated that the water needs of a single luxury hotel is equivalent to the requirements of approximately six villages. Geologists have warned of possible damage to the water table and groundwater depletion.*

### Effect on Ecology

Goa is often alluded to as an unspoilt paradise. However, a closer look beneath the surface reveals how misleading this image is. In May 1993, the first ever exhaustive report on the Goan environment was released by Ecoforum, a coalition of environmental groups. And tourism, often called the smokeless industry, has been found to be deeply involved in the destruction of Goa's ecology.

Along the scenic Sal river, the many large, luxury hotels that have come up are blamed for polluting the river with their wastes.

## GOA-ING CRAZY

The misconceptions about Goa as a free-living samba-dancing poor relation of the Costa de Sol probably stems from the subconscious desire on the part of the average Indian to find an Elsewhere to underwrite his own taboo-ridden existence. That most Goans are deeply religious and conservative about their private lives is lost on most which probably explains the (recent) poster sanctioned by Air India depicting a prostrate Maharajah ogling oomph on a beach. The poster has driven Goans to street protest: campaigners include not only women's groups but also the state minister for tourism. The injustice is obvious: Why should Goans have to fulfill the role of the exhibitionist polar opposite of traditional demure India? After all they have the right to uphold their particular way of life just as everybody else does and not run the risk of being painted as heedless hedonists. In fact, the differences in lifestyle between the Goans and the tourists

who flock to its coasts are readily apparent in the tragi-comic culture clash that most visitors to the beaches of Konkani can witness. Comic, because of the suspicion with which sun-bathing residents of western suburbia are surveyed by sari clad peasant women and tragic because children in the villages adjoining Vagator and Baga grow up exposed to too much, too early. The effects of the flower child invasion on Goa may have declined, but the dividing line between being one of India's hottest tourist spots and also one of the most culturally jeopardised societies, may be fading fast. In these circumstances, it is up to their compatriots not to buy into the image of Goa that outsiders feel comfortable enough to visit. However unique the narrow strip of land that the Portuguese colonised and filled with pastry shops and churches may be, Goa should not be seen as more amenable to risqué posters than the rest of India.

*Courtesy: Times of India*

Hotels and the real estate developments sprouting nearby began 'buying' water on a large scale from village fields in Sangolda, Saligao and Calangute to fill their swimming pools. Water has been sold for as little as 5 paise per litre, while villagers face an acute shortage of water, particularly in the summer months. It has been estimated that the water needs of a single luxury hotel is equivalent to the requirements of approximately six villages. Geologists have warned of possible damage to the water table and groundwater depletion.

Goa's natural beauty, for which tourists came in the first place has been badly affected by hotel construction. Around villages like Baga, Calangute and Candolim, trees and fields have given way to concrete structures. Exotic plants, alien to coastal ecology have replaced coconut trees.

Hotels have also been responsible for the bulldozing of coastal sand dunes,

in clear violation of the Environment Protection Act. Many of them have violated the ban of construction within 200 mts. of the High Tide Line. In total disregard for the EPA, numerous bore wells have been drilled within 200 mts of the High Tide Line, threatening ingress of saline water to fresh water wells in the area.

### Golf Courses

Goa's experience shows that the so called 'benefits' accruing from tourism are always lost in the debilitating process of social, environmental and cultural decline. When we examine the question of who are the chief beneficiaries, in the long term, it is obvious that the people most affected by tourism benefit the least.

*Frederick Noronha is a freelance journalist. He lives in Goa.*



# TOURSCAPE

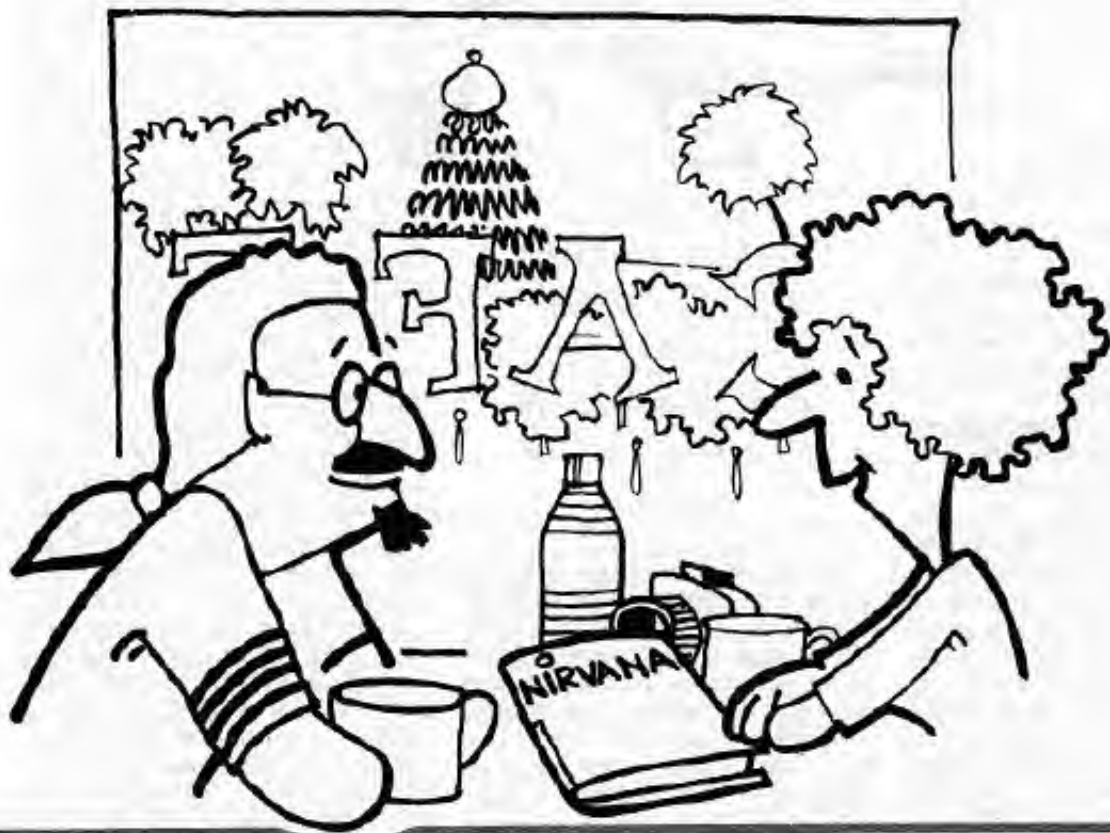
RIPIN KALRA



"TAKE MY ADVICE - BEDREST FOR BOTH OF YOU"



NO SCOPE HERE I'M QUITTING AND TAKING ANOTHER JOB SOMEWHERE



# CANNED CULTURE

## TEMPLES, FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

JAYA JAITLEY

Tourism is motivated by and serves the needs of travellers who journey for a cultural purpose, among others. We therefore come rightaway to defining culture and find that it cannot remain at the level of the song and dance routine, but spreads to involve food, dress, language, religious practices, architecture and indigenous lifestyles, all of which animate the landscape of a journey. A sunset can never be packaged and sold, but the trappings provided around it is what is sold to the traveller as tourism. These trappings should reflect the distinct ethos of the place. That is what makes tourism work. What does a genuine tourist really remember about that magical evening on the beach? That a Coladrink was at hand and the hamburger tasted just like the one in Hawaii... or was it Bali or Pattaya? Or does he remember that the huts, music, local refreshments and the indigenous people all built the distinct and unforgettable aura of the place and these were the inalienable ingredients necessary to make that sunset special?

Today tourism is being packaged like a formula, marketable in the same form globally, a product like soap or TV dinners where someone else has decided what the ingredients and packaging should be and everyone blindly accepts it as a mark of progress, to present 'tourism' and 'tourist facilities' in the very same way across the length and breadth of 'developing' countries. What are tourists really searching for, and what do we offer them? Also, what do we want and how do we go about getting it? These are questions which are deep and funda-

mental when juxtaposed with the entire aspect of presenting India's culture, in all its contradictions, in its genuine form, and with honesty, and earning money out of all this in the name of tourism.



*'Decadence, perhaps, could be defined as nothing more than the artificial embrace of what once had been natural'.*

Let us take the traditional Indian tourist who has for centuries, set out to traverse long distances to visit a place of pilgrimage. Originally, the religiosity and penance involved required the endurance of hardships or at least an observation of austerity. Comfortless travel, halts at railway rest rooms or lodges, pre-dawn cold baths or treks with crowds were part of the aura.

Since conveniences and facilities were part of the materialistic rather than spiritual world, consumerist oriented infrastructures were not a part of the requisites. This is not to say that provisions required of the pilgrimage were not part of trade or commerce. From *chappals* (slippers) to flower garlands and incense sticks to a multitude of offerings, instant or permanent marketplaces were created for tourist pilgrims. The difference here was that the demand was for offerings and not for personal comforts, entertainment or diversions.

When fundamentalism grows, spiritualism dies, and materialism wins. This has taken religious pilgrimages into the 'modern' age and reframed it within a new wordgame - 'temple tourism'. We have a host of these possible journeys now, each serving a different purpose. Take Tirupati, nestling atop a cool and verdant hill, overlooking the dusty landscape of southern Andhra Pradesh. Always a major attraction for the devout, it has grown into a multi-crore township that demonstrates an efficient, attractive and disciplined system of administration: almost Vatican city-like. Apart from the crores it earns from the tonsuring of heads, the quick turnover spread of restaurants, handicraft shops, banks, telecom systems, and cottages of various types, provides everything a pilgrim needs.

Tirupati has become so well ordered and pleasant, that now, even the not-so-spiritual, plan family or working holiays in the environs of Tirupati! Tourism has been the provider of comforts and a *darshan* (glimpse of the deity) which is thrown in makes a perfect formula for temple tourism.



Having Tirupati as a model encouraged the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) working through Kalyan Singh's BJP Ministry in Uttar Pradesh, to promote temple tourism in Ayodhya. Since the 'state' is supposed to be secular and not spend money on building temples or mosques, how else to mask it but by spending public funds on tourist hostels also known as pilgrim facilities, and all sorts of other infrastructure that would be required *once the temple's sanctum sanctorum is in hand*. Tourism of the temple variety can therefore also serve as a convenient *camouflage* for non-secular intentions. The ultimate benefit to either religion or tourism is yet to be seen.

The third variety is the *simulated* tourist atmosphere created around a temple spot with inherent tourist potential. Puri comes to mind. The imposing Jagannath temple attracts lakhs of people and especially at the Rath Festival, the crowds themselves become scenes of attraction for the voyeur-tourist. Sensing this, the Orissa government has begun organising 'events' at Puri which are part of the new genre of 'tourism festivals' as against 'real' festivals. Food and craft stalls, cultural programmes, inaugurations and closing ceremonies and staged pageantry recall the culture of the state and the history of the temple. This is being repeated at other places too, again as a formula being packaged and marketed. And here lies the inherent danger which Pico Iyer, the journalist and literary travel writer describes so aptly in *Video Nights in Kathmandu* - 'Western tourists invariably visit destruction on the places they visit, descending in droves on some *authentic eastern village* until only two things are certain: it is neither eastern nor authentic'. The 'market' becomes all. Women are still judged by their ability to look attractive and the only professions where they are paid a higher wage than men are modelling and prostitution. For this world, India's naked *sadhus*, cowdung, Mahatma Gandhi's *charkha* (spinning wheel) and sweat ridden crowds offer promise of contact with the more fundamental matters of life. But do we allow this to them? Not if we can help it. Instead we must give them canned 'heritage' with the price label indicating an exchange in dollars. And while we are busy selling a pre-fab, synthetic version of India at the staged *melas* (fairs) and 'festi-

# A

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### The Pilgrim's Progress?

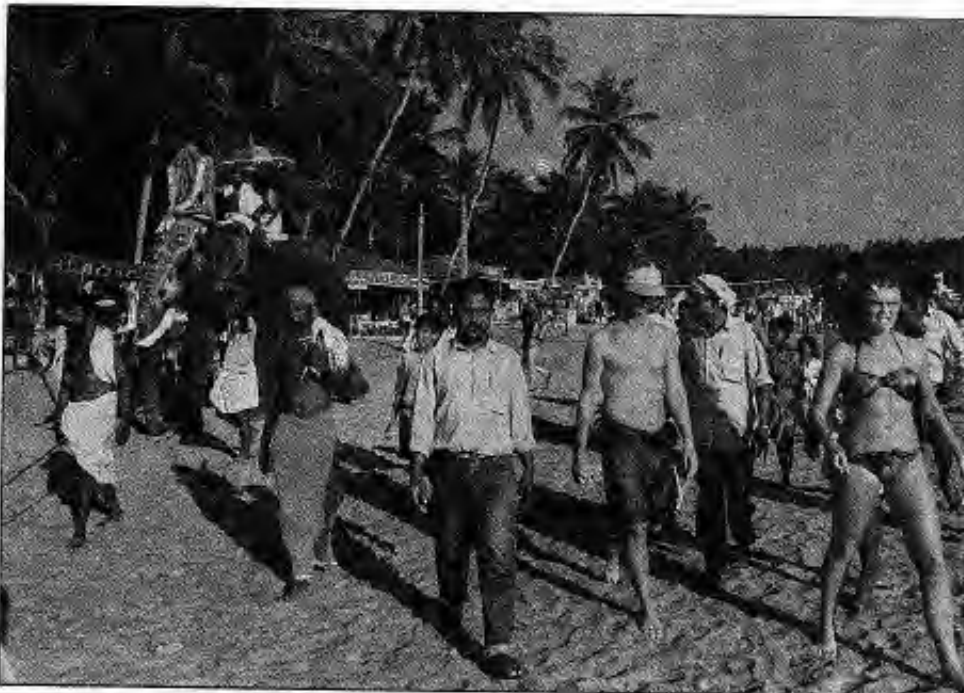
*The imposing Jagannath temple attracts lakhs of people and especially at the Rath Festival, the crowds themselves become scenes of attraction for the voyeur-tourist. Sensing this, the Orissa government has begun organising 'events' at Puri which are part the new genre of 'tourism festivals' as against 'real' festivals.*

vals' unrelated to the seasons, we are busy creating western tourism for our own brown sahibs. Why else do tourist coach stop overs in UP and Haryana have a food plaza ambience with a host of foreign soft drinks and chocolates at forty rupees a bar? On the roads are the tea stalls, peanut vendors, fruit carts and *charpoys*, but these drive-in stop-overs take you to a different world which is not the real India even in

ambience. Foreign tourists would have that feeling of *deja vu*, and the seed of ennui would be sown in the minds of those who came looking for the underskin of India.

Tourist festivals with canned heritage recall again the perceptive words of Pico Iyer. 'Decadence, perhaps, could be defined as nothing more than the artificial embrace of what once had been natural'.

COURTESY: PRADEEP CHANDRA KUMAR



The western tourist's dreams and his dollars ensures that he gets his village belles along with his Coke and MacDonald's hamburger. India is currently making sure that we have it all efficiently organised. The government is engaged in finalizing a Rs. 39,000 crore Tourism Action Plan because of the foreign exchange earning potential of this sector: hotels, motels, air taxis and facilities for which Rs. 18,000 crores in dollars is expected by 1996-97. In contrast, take the neglected railways. The rail line so closely linked to tour-

ism, touches the lives of almost every Indian citizen. It dwells in the psyche of each person as a symbol of communication, transport, development and hope of a journey to a better world. With a simple replacement of plastic or paper cups used for serving tea on the railways by earthenware cups (*kullars*), not only would one lakh potter families be kept in work throughout the year but costs would actually be less since the former cost 40 paise while the *kullar* costs 24 paise. Besides, a tourist would surely want a taste of Indian culture,

indigenous lifestyles and traditional utility goods. Instead, all logic is stood on its head by providing soda fountains at roadside bars and earthen *kullars* at ethnic evenings inside five star hotels. This is 'artificial embrace' at its most tragic, since only a few potter families with access to the fashionable set manage to get by with their 'designer' pots while village potters are jammed in a cul-de-sac with no markets and no opportunities for alternate employment. Some villages have seen potters' families turn to prostitution for survival.

In countries like Japan to which Europeans and Americans flock for glimpses of the kimono, Kabuki and a taste of sushi it is the more unchanged cities like Kyoto that convey the true taste of Japan. The temples and the small, older houses show tourists the original Japan. Confidence in their own traditions, change at their own pace, facilities for their own needs first is reflected in the use of Japanese only for all road signs, at train and subway stations, airports and offices. Hardly anyone can understand or instruct a tourist on how to get anywhere if the conversation is to be in English. In India we boast of our great heritage, speak of heritage tourism and cultural and linguistic diversity and yet, even in our own national conference, we argue an end up speaking in



RIPIN KALRA

*The rail line so closely linked to tourism, touches the lives of almost every Indian citizen. It dwells in the psyche of each person as a symbol of communication, transport, development and hope of a journey to a better world.*



English because everyone does not understand one common Indian language. Nor do we develop facilities to provide inter-regional translators. Our tourism industry too is gearing outwards rather than inwards. It forces everyone to learn French or German to keep tourists and international conference visitors happy rather than develop pride in our rich linguistic traditions, literary manuscripts and calligraphy, making these worthy subjects for tourists to absorb and admire as 'Indian culture', which is what tourism should highlight and develop rather than 'sell' in the commercial sense. A recent blurb in a national newspaper emphasises the aberrations that are creeping in while selling concocted heritage or 'ethnic' tourism viz, 'the Bikaner Camel Festival staged for the first time this year in January (note the creation of mock camel fairs while the real camel fair at Pushkar has receded to the background as a place for the genuine sale of camels and is now just a tourist oriented event) is yet another addition to the galaxy of festivals and fairs that Rajasthan hosts every year. That these festivals are extremely popular not only with the Indian tourist, but with the foreigner as well, is borne out by the fact that even small children in Jaisalmer and elsewhere speak fluent French, thanks to their frequent interaction with French tourists. Similarly, Rajasthan business



persons speak good English even though they have never been to school. This is a welcome fall out of their dealings with outsiders, foreigners in particular'. It is astounding that journalists should propagate the notion that foreign tourists will now bring linguistic abilities to Indians in villages, implying that there is no need for the state to worry about education or employment. Tourism will teach us to be foreigners overnight while wearing red *sajis* (turbans), and riding on camels to catch their attention and their dollars.

The blurb further states that 'Rajasthan is the torch-bearer in de-

claring tourism as an industry' and that the officialdom in charge 'is doing whatever is humanly possible to make Rajasthan a tourist haven'.

The development of tourism, like any other area that is governed by government policy must be based on self-respect and self-confidence. The India we are selling must be the real India. If we have handicrafts and handlooms at simulated tourist-oriented *melas*, (fairs) it must be part of the true life of the country. As Nanz, (a big department store in Delhi) takes over the selling of vegetables, and Nescafe invades rural cattle fairs, we carry coconuts from Karnataka to Surajkund, Haryana (where an annual crafts fair is held). Village *haats* (markets) are being flooded by plastic goods and mill-made garments, and now multinationals are poised to enter our small-scale garment and hosiery industries while we organise the bric-a-brac variety of crafts at city *melas*. In this situation, crafts, which were and should be part of our everyday life to sustain the vast population of rural artisans engaged in their manufacture, are becoming bonzai type souvenirs in a tourist-oriented ethos. All over the world we have seen that the souvenir type of craft selling contributes to low quality, high prices, assembly-line attitudes and distorted usage, none of which can be counted as a positive contribution to craft development.

A living culture which views itself with pride offers itself with confidence unrelated to market forces or global compulsions. This has to be the *sine qua non* of tourism in India so that both Indians and foreigners have access to the real India at its best.

RUPIN KALRA

*Jaya Jaitly is a friend of many causes. In the craft sector, Jaya is activist, consultant and designer. She is the founder of the Dastakari Haat Samiti, an organisation engaged in the marketing and development of crafts through their own initiatives. Jaya has also taken up the causes of women and tourism and has written extensively on them. She is also a civil activist and part of the Socialist group in mainstream politics in India.*



# THE COLUMBUS MYTH

## Discovery or Conquest?

IMPLICATIONS FOR TOURISM IN  
SOUTH ASIA

NINA RAO

We are all familiar with history books recording the 'discovery' of America by Columbus 500 years ago. Perhaps we are not aware of the controversies that emerged during the celebrations of the event in 1992. An Italian seaman, in search of the legendary Cipangu and Cathay (Japan and China), of Marco Polo tales, by accident came upon a continent which was to transform Europe after 1492. Perhaps Europe's other never had an opportunity to express its own point of view until now. Today, some honour

Columbus as a discoverer; others call him a destroyer. There is confusion about where he landed and several countries claim the privilege of owning Columbus. Even Columbus seems to have been unsure of what he had accomplished. Historian Carmelo Delgado claims that 'he died believing he had discovered a new route to India'. Puerto Rico, San Salvador, Cat Island, the Dominican Republic, Seville and Genoa, all commemorated Columbus's 'discovery', which seems to have been inspired by the terrestrial globe crafted

by Martin Behaim of Nuremberg in 1492. On this globe, unexplored regions were filled in with fanciful creatures like angels and sea serpents in vivid and brilliant colours. The Americas are not shown and this explains the context of the heated debate between Europe and the Americas on the concept of 'discovery'.

The word 'discovery' is of European coinage, claim the Americans who prefer the term 'meeting of cultures'. Latin Americans (who popularised the term used by the French in the 19th century) called themselves Latinos to distinguish themselves from the North Americans and have coined the term *hispanidad* to express the spirit of kinship and togetherness based on five centuries of common experience. However, in a book called *Exiled in the Land of the Free: Democracy, Indian Nations and the US Constitution*, Oren Lyons, the traditional chief of the Onondaga nation and a professor of American Studies, says that Columbus invaded America: 'Democracy didn't come over on the Nina, the Pinta and the Santa Maria'. What came across was the Papal Bull of 1452, to enslave all Saracens and Pagans and the Papal Bull of 1493, to bring them to the Christian faith, along with their property. The American Indians were robbed of all their land and their culture was marginalised; they were wiped out by disease or enslaved.

Of the people who first migrated to the Americas via the Bering Straits, almost nothing is known. They perhaps carried very little cultural information with them. They developed an independent culture in the Americas, which was reinforced by subsequent trans-Pacific migrations. From Europe, Icelanders and Greenlanders also sighted the American continent on fishing trips. Thus Columbus did not discover a new world but established contact between two worlds new to each other, because his voyage was made at a time when navigating instruments made it possible to maintain contact with discovered lands. Thus the Americas came



SUNVA

*The Americas are not shown and this explains the context of the heated debate between Europe and the Americas on the concept of 'discovery'.*

within the range of action of Europe, and the significance is to be measured by the historical consequence of such action. 'But', says Lyons, 'myths die hard' and insists that today the 'native voices' are in a position to communicate their version of history, which has been falsified in the 500 years of conquest, colonisation and colonial administration. What is not recognised by Europe in the process of the flow of people, plants and animals between the two worlds, is that the Spaniards brought back democracy from the Mayas, architecture from the Incas and gold to pay back war debts.

At a lecture at the India International Centre, New Delhi, the Colombian, Samper Pizano said, "Europe was then going through a period of prostration, war and decadence, therefore, America enabled Europe to regain its hope, reactivate its quest for knowledge, arouse the evangelists and promote its industry". Octavio Paz has claimed that 'on the ruins of the pre-Columbian world, the Spanish and the Portuguese erected a grandiose historical structure' which was the imposition of Christian monotheism, the Spanish language, social organisation, custom and artistic traditions, so as to wipe out the pluralistic ethos of diverse societies that made up the pre-Columbian period. The resistance to the word 'discovery' and the concept of *hispanidad* are therefore an expression of reclaiming the validity of the pluralistic ethos, not because it glorifies the past, but because it is humanistic, revolutionary and wishes to negate absolutism and domination.

Who would now take the place of

## ROMANCING THE STONE AGE



COURTESY: LITNE READER

*'Tasaday' tribesman Gintui with his two wives and children. The bottom photograph was taken by Swiss anthropologist/journalist Oswald Iten during an unexpected visit in March 1986; the top photograph was taken a week later by Walter Unger and Jay Ullal, from the German magazine Stern, during a pre-announced visit. Iten maintains that the supposed tribe is really a group of local subsistence farmers induced to act like Stone Age cave dwellers. The photos first appeared in Cultural Survival Quarterly (Vol. 15, No. 1, 1991)*

Columbus on the map of 'discovery'? The aboriginal settlers, the Jews who came in the second century, Chinese Buddhists, Irish monks, Norsemen and Leif Erikson and all the unnamed

others who did not shout Eureka! After Columbus circulated fabulous tales of the strange lands he visited, like San Salvador, Cuba, Haiti, he introduced to Europe for the first time, tobacco, maize



and potatoes.

On the second voyage from Cadiz in 1493, he explored the Antilles, Puerto Rico and Jamaica. On his third expedition in 1498, he landed in Trinidad and explored the South American continent. In 1502, he set sail for the Caribbean to explore the coastal route to Central America and the South Seas. These were the first resorts developed for tourists in the Atlantic region.

In his letters to Isabella of Spain, he wrote of the marvellous simplicity and generosity and fearfulness of the natives, who were soon to become pawns in the imperial conflicts of greedy European nations. The opportunity of a real meeting of cultures with the Mayans was lost because of the Europeans' lust for gold. Great suffering and distress was caused to the natives whose lands were appropriated for growing sugar and wheat and rearing cattle. Thus, trans-atlantic contacts led to a demographic catastrophe for a civilisation which was enslaved and destroyed by the invading lifestyle and rapacious

*Can we remember the  
Maya, the Inca and the  
Aztec empires as well as  
the American Indian  
nations, who invited  
systematic campaigns  
for conquest as we  
ourselves are  
increasingly getting  
featured on the  
international tourism map?*

greed of the hard-headed 'explorers' sent out of Europe. What Europe carried away, on the other hand, was to determine new social habits and luxuries. For example, cacao, which was an important ingredient in social rituals in Mexico, a means of exchange, and a royal food and drink, became a fashionable fad in 17th century Europe.

Geographical experience, it is claimed, is the most empirical of all forms of scientific enquiry, and yet it is the most dependent on eye-witness accounts. How true was their representation of unknown lands? Why were their people viewed as 'simple' and why didn't Europe acknowledge that the diversity of non-European civilisations gave them a critical and fresh view of themselves? It is perhaps as a consequence of raising these questions that we see how modern tourism continues to use concepts like the 'discovery' of new destinations which were unknown to European pleasure seekers in the early part of the 20th century. There is talk of ethnicity, local culture and tradition, archaeology and architecture, which are reproduced in a manner similar to the Columbus era, when the tourists return with photographs of men and materials as proof of their 'discoveries'.

The mass tourists resemble the ex-soldiers, merchants, *hidalgos* and mercenaries who accompanied Columbus



in his search for gold, because they are also in search of luxury at a low price. In their push towards new pleasure peripheries, they create a new native paradise at all the destinations they visit, by wiping out the native lifestyle, the culture, the food, norms and traditions by imposing a homogenised 'Western Services' model in the remotest regions of the world. In this model, disease and sex tourism decimate populations, deprive people of their land and traditional economy, and turn self-reliant cultures into independent enclaves, with enslaved people who now offer their labour as cooks, waiters, guides and entertainers.

The political expression of the decolonising of the Columbus myth has implications for tourism as well. As India marches on to a target of 5 million tourists, we must ask: Do we co-exist on equal terms with the tourists, or do we get wiped out as whole nations and civilisations have done? Can we remember the Maya, the Inca and the

*As travel agents and tour operators ably aided by governments, deliver Asian people and their cultures in packages to tourists from around the world, we feel that tourism myths also need to be critically examined.*

Aztec empires as well as the American Indian nations, who invited systematic campaigns for conquest, as we ourselves are increasingly getting featured on the international tourism map? These nations were prized because of their population, sophisticated cultures and economies. In seeking to open up our country for tourism as we look for economic benefits, are we not walking towards a new colonial policy of devel-

opment, valuable in itself, and yet, could we turn into just another stop on an itinerary that expands the commerce of tourism across the globe?

As travel agents and tour operators, ably aided by governments, deliver Asian people and their cultures in packages to tourists from around the world, tourism myths also need to be critically examined. Local voices need to be heard; local participation needs to be encouraged; above all, local control needs to be protected if tourism has to be viewed as a 'meeting of cultures' rather than an invasion.

The contemporary debate on the Columbus myth lifts a mantle from the wilful obscurity of things as they are, and helps us to take a critical view of what we are doing. It helps us to distance ourselves from immediate concerns, which are often of short term value and by relating the present to the past, we can forecast a future that should be meaningful, not only for us but for future generations. ●



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*Since the Renaissance we have been constantly trying to go beyond our limits. Today, we are trying to determine those limits. We have in fact reached a point where we have to ask, what lies beyond these newly identified limits?*

*- Erhard Eppler*

# MANUFACTURED MYTHS THE 'FAKELORE' OF HAWAI'I

GARY MASON

*'Tourist literature attempts to mystify the mundane, amplify the exotic, minimise the misery, rationalise the disquietude and romanticise the strange...' In this article, the author chillingly illustrates the place of myth in the promotion and operation of tourism in Hawaii. He uses copious references to other industry analysts, exploring through them, the psychology that prompts both tourists and promoters in myth making.*



Waikiki Beach, Hawaii



Your jet has just shuddered to a reverse-engined stop at the end of the Reef Runway, and no sooner does the pilot turn and head for one of the airport's multi-spoked terminals than the aircraft's speakers begin injecting a mellifluous medley of familiar Hawaiian Muzak into your mainland mind.

"Honolulu Lady, where'd you get these eyes... I Wanna Go Back to My Little Grass Shack in Kealahou... and Beyond the Reef" do indeed exist, as you knew they always did, but you need a first lungful of balmy tropical air and intoxicating whiffs of plumeria (frangipani) to mellow your pre-Hawaiian skepticism:

"ALOHA!" the red-white-and-blue sign leading into Customs proclaims to foreigners: "WELCOME TO HONOLULU, HAWAII, U.S.A."

Ah, yes AHH-LLOW-HUH! Even out there in the computer perfect terminal, as you drift down to other levels of textured concrete and fluorescent efficiency on a stainless steel escalator, those haunting, twangy steel guitar riffs continue to massage your brain and cause palm trees, hula girls and flowers to sway through your Everyman's Vision of Paradise.

Then - in living quadrophonic, multiplex stereo and laser vivid color - a local lady, a wahine, with long reddish hair, cinder eyes and chocolate thighs, approaches you from Somewhere Back of Beyond, drapes a garland of orchids around your neck, and with a kiss of sincere affection decisively ejects any jet-set cool you had saved up on the flight over.

"Aloha," she says, repeating that pleasant Hawaiian cliché, and you melt into a heap of perfume and smiles.

*-Insight Hawai'i Guide*

Stretching in an arc, more than 4,000 kilometres west of the US mainland, the state of Hawaii includes eight principal islands. Six - O'ahu, Maui, Kaua'i, Hawai'i, Lana'i, and Moloka'i - all accommodate visitors. One, Ni'ihau, is privately owned - barred to tourists, and home to more than 200 Hawaiians who still speak the native language. The eighth, Kaho'olawe, is uninhabited and used as a training area by the US military.

As a holiday area Hawai'i has many



*Sunbathers on the beach (Hawaii)*

distinct advantages ranging from the sheer physical beauty and attractions of the individual islands, to the charm of the Hawaiian people. For the past four decades, Hawai'i has been one of the world's most advertised and mass-marketed tourist destinations. For visitors from the United States, Canada and Japan, Hawai'i though a few hours away by jet aircraft, is light-years away in fantasy and make-believe. *Hawai'i is a state of mind to the overseas visitor.* It encapsulates the very essence of paradise; it is the image of 'escape' from the pressures and stress of daily Western life, Hawai'i - the very word, the conjured vision - is bewitching, captivating and intoxicating. Hawai'i is 'she', the Western image of the exotic native 'female' in her enchanting and enticing allure. This has become known as the 'Aloha Spirit' of Hawai'i, and something that the visitor industry and travel trade has fully capitalised on.

#### Images, Myths and Fantasies

Tourists ultimately become part of a process that usually endorses the images prepared for them by the tour operator's publicity machine, and these images play a significant role in orienting the tourist's awareness and structuring his experiences (Rossel). Crick

states that the imagery of international tourism is not, for the most part about socio-economic reality, but 'myths' and 'fantasies'. These myths, fuelled in part by industry hyperbole, an expanding array of books for the armchair traveller, television and cinema, have become deeply absorbed into the recesses of the public's imagination, and often have little to do with things as they really are. There is frequently an enormous gap between the description and image of a country as promoted by the tourist industry and the actual social and political reality. Destination countries are described in theological

terminology as 'heaven' and 'paradise' islands become 'pearls'; they are 'enchanted', 'exotic' and 'excitingly primitive'. Tourist literature attempts to 'mystify the mundane; amplify the exotic; minimise the misery; rationalise the disquietude, and romanticise the strange'. Tourism is sold through and indulged in the myth that the sun always shines, the natives always smile, and as the *Economist* states in its 1991 global survey on tourism, 'every evening ends with the best sex you ever had.'

Garcia, in his discussion of the tourist industry, argues that myths are generated and administrated in order to achieve diverse ends. The travel industry creates a myth about a country or particular area, or uses existing myths held in Western societies with the main purpose of generating income - after all, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that tourism is first and foremost a business. Tourists, for their part, seek to find confirmation and the tangible 'reality' of their image formed of the holiday area, to *indulge* the myths that are shaped by touristic mass-marketing, even if it is only a cliché. The industry takes up this aspiration and offers a picture-postcard fantasy world, and what is eventually presented to the tourist, both creates and fulfils the de-

*Hawai'i - the very word,  
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COURTESY: USIS



Shown here is a public luau, a feature of Aloha Week in Honolulu, Hawaii

sire to see as many 'safe' and enjoyable things as possible, surrounded by a sanitised atmosphere of the 'exotic'. This, according to Krippendorff leads to the development of 'Operetta-like resorts which have nothing whatsoever to do with reality and which are 'pure theatre', provided artificially with all the expected scenery.' Boorstin argues that the tourist seldom likes the authentic product of foreign culture; he prefers his own 'caricatured' expectations, and usually the image or well-concocted myths, surpasses reality.

Valene Smith in her seminal book *Hosts and Guests* writes derisively of the plane loads of high-volume charter tourists who arrive en masse (equipped, no doubt, with name-tags and matching luggage) and inundate Hawaii most of the year. Smith argues that the vast majority of these tourists have middle-class incomes and values, and travel with a 'you get what you pay for' attitude. They occupy accommodation of every grade and generally expect hotel and tourist industry staff to cater to their wants as well as to their needs. Cohen takes the issue further and states that at the holiday destination, these 'institutionalised' tourists are likely to be insulated from the realities of local life within an environmental 'bubble'. They much prefer to purchase a complete holiday package, to stay in purpose-built accommodation, to eat familiar food, and rely on the 'expertise' of the tour operator whilst away from home. Boorstin, whose observations are almost more relevant today than when they were written three decades

ago, reflects that:

'The tourist who arrives at his destination, where the tourist facilities have been 'improved', remains almost as insulated as he was *en route* (the author argues the tourist reaches his destination without the experience of having gone). Today, the ideal tourist hotel abroad is as

much as possible like the best

accommodation back home. Beds, lighting facilities, ventilation, air conditioning, central heating, plumbing are all American style, although a shrewd hotel management will, of course make a special effort to retain some 'local atmosphere'.

Krippendorff uses the term 'Tourist Ghetto' - holidays in artificially created environments, made-to-measure for the 'indulgence' of the tourist. Other writers refer to the 'Hilton' concept: an attractively designed hotel or resort complex, 'cosmetically-exotic' - the rooms and public areas frequently display local 'art' providing an 'ethnic' atmosphere, along with native personnel who furnish a touch of local colour, reinforcing the fantasy of 'abroad' - but ultimately safe and interchangeable with similar tourist 'cocoons' around the world. They are completely

Below left and right: Hula dancers in native Polynesian costume. Floral neckpieces, known as leis, are a universally recognised symbol of Hawaii.

COURTESY: USIS



self-sufficient, cater to every whim, and the tourist need not leave the complex.

### Fantasy's Reality

In an editorial feature on the Hawaiian Islands, the glossy American publication *Travel Holiday* opens with the leading statement, 'In America's Pacific Eden, reality is whatever fantasy you favor'.

Over the last few years, the Hawaiian Islands have seen the development of what are generally considered as state-of-the-art 'fantasy' or 'mega-resorts'. One such development is the Hyatt Regency Waikoloa on the Big Island of Hawai'i. Costing nearly half a billion dollars to construct and described as '*The most spectacular resort on Earth*', it emerges: 'Carved out of the jagged lava rock on the sun-drenched

lee side of the Big Island of Hawai'i, the Hyatt Regency Waikoloa dedicates 62 acres to sheer enjoyment and luxury. The focal point of the resort is a four-acre, beach rimmed saltwater [man-made] lagoon which serves as a picturesque waterway, tropical fish haven, and swimming and snorkeling retreat.

From the moment you enter the magnificent main lobby, you know you are about to experience something spectacularly unique. Attendants in Hawaiian dress escort you through a Polynesian palace to a monumental staircase of towering columns that frame a panoramic view of the entire resort along Waiulua Bay. As you are whisked away to your room by sleek ferryboat or futuristic tram, your breath is taken away by the awesome beauty of the exotic statuary and tropical gardens that spread before you. For those who

prefer a stroll, a [one mile long] flagstone walkway displays Oriental and Pacific antiques and art treasures to heighten the aesthetic experience' (Hyatt 1992 promotional brochure).

Every conceivable activity and recreation is catered for and with over 20,000 square feet of retail space at the resort, shopping itself rises to the level of physical sport. The brochure goes on to offer the ultimate seduction:

'Whether it's a childhood fantasy of becoming a cowboy for a day or flying off to an oceanfront cliff for a candlelit dinner for two; an adventure fantasy of a big game safari or hooking the "big one" on your own chartered boat, at the fantastic Hyatt Regency Waikoloa, you can fulfil any one of these dreams or create your own custom-tailored fantasy with the help of an imaginative and resourceful staff. You can even have a close encounter with dolphins at the resort's own dolphin learning center...'

Applying Boorstin's theory, the Hyatt designers are involved in a self-conscious effort to provide local atmosphere that is itself totally American: outside, the real Hawai'i surrounds the resort complex, but inside it is only a representation of Hawaiian style. The hotel unequivocally accomplishes the unique effect of making the experiences of Hawai'i quite secondhand.

The powerful images and intangibility of this particular brand of tourism product along with the associated



*From the moment you enter the magnificent main lobby, you know you are about to experience something spectacularly unique. Attendants in Hawaiian dress escort you through a Polynesian palace to a monumental staircase of towering columns that frame a panoramic view of the entire resort along Waiulua Bay.*



notions of power, service, self-indulgence, exploitation, escapism, the abdication of responsibilities for a week or two, tourism as 'play', the tourist as 'infant', role-reversal, all combine to form a heady cocktail of the ultimate dream-vacation.

#### Authenticity, Culture and Commoditisation

The main focus of Boorstin's argu-

pseudo events for the tour operators who must have a dance of the vestal virgins precisely at 10.00 am every Wednesday.'

The most popular of all excursions in Honolulu is to the Polynesian Cultural Centre, where visitors can observe 'native' people re-enacting traditional scenes and 'tribal' dances from their past. This extremely successful tourist complex has been staging and

Polynesian villages' have a distinctly Disneyland character, but it does provide the tourist with excellent 'photo opportunities' and gives the feeling that one has 'experienced' the ethnic side of Hawaiian life. Interestingly, the entire 'fake' enterprise is owned and operated by the Mormon Church, which views the attraction as a social necessity (important to preserve the 'heritage' of the indigenous people), and as a cultural 'Interpretive Centre' for visitors.

Many of today's Hawaiians worry about tourism overdevelopment and a number are striving to preserve the state's national treasures, including what remains of its original culture. Arguably, it is not easy for many visitors to distinguish the culture from what amounts to kitschy parody; Hawai'i's promoters still keep festooning arriving tourists at Honolulu International Airport with plastic leis (the Hawaiian custom of greeting visitors was to drape a garland of orchids around their neck) on a scale unrivalled since the missionaries swaddled the women in muumuu's.

Dr. Haunani-Kay Trask, Professor of American Studies at the University of Hawai'i and outspoken member of the Hawaiian Movement, a proactive nationalist group, hits out at the garish and tacky 'Polynesian Revues', the mass-marketing promotional strategies and commercial advertisements that use Hawaiian dance and language to sell everything from package holidays to foot deodorant, the trampling and desecration of sacred *heiau* (temples and burial grounds) as recreation sites for tourist activities:

'Hawaiian women, are marketed on posters from Paris to Tokyo promising an unfettered, 'primitive' sexuality. Burdened with the commodification of our culture and exploitation of our people, Hawaiians exist in an occupied country whose hostage people are forced to witness (and for many to participate in) our own collective humiliation as tourist artifacts for the 'First World'.

Trask goes on to form an analogy between Hawaiian tourism and prostitution, arguing that the first requirement is the transformation of the product, or the cultural attribute, much as a woman must be transformed to look like a prostitute, i.e., something that is complicitous in her own commodification. Thus *hula* dancers wear



A whimsical sand sculpture, with its creator standing by, sits on the beach at Waikiki. Such sculptures are often constructed as advertising to entice tourists to various hotels or restaurants. In the background, now hemmed in by high rise neighbors, is the pink stucco Royal Hawaiian Hotel, a reminder of the quieter beach front of the past.

ment is that tourist attractions serve their purpose best when they are reduced to 'pseudo-events'. John Urry, discussing the sociology of tourism, says:

'As a result, tourist entrepreneurs and the indigenous populations are induced to produce ever-more extravagant displays for the gullible observer who is thereby further removed from the local people.'

Stalker, in his thought provoking essay on tourism quotes an ex-President of the Hawaiian Visitors Bureau who confesses that:

'Since real cultural events do not always occur on schedule, we invent

selling tours, shows and gala dinners since the early 1960s, and has been generally recognised in show-business circles as one of the longest-running, sold-out floor-shows in the United States. The main stage shows, performed nightly by young Polynesian students from Fiji, Tahiti, Samoa, Tonga, New Zealand and Hawai'i, are designed, according to the promotional brochure, to give visitors a 'pure cultural view of Polynesia.' The cultural display would be more at home in West-End or The Broadway Muscial Revue - it has many 'show-biz' moments and the 'carefully reconstructed



clown-like make-up, don cellophane grass-skirts, and perform what used to be a sacred dance for profit rather than a joyful and truly Hawaiian celebration of human and divine nature.

The songs have only eroticism, no spiritual meaning. The dances are lascivious; there is no sacred interpretation. The land is ravaged by concrete monsters; neither the sea nor the sky is safe from destruction. There is racism - which our ancestors never knew. And neither the young nor the old can lie down by the wayside in safety as Kamahameha I (Hawaiian King) decreed. There is nothing Hawaiian left; it is all *haole* now' (Lydia Aholo, *hanai* (adopted) daughter of Queen Liliuokalani, quoted in *Social Process in Hawaii*).

Unquestionably, tourism has played a major role in redefining Hawaiian values and practices. The perceptions that outsiders have of Hawaiians, and to some extent the self-perceptions that Hawaiians have of themselves, have been affected by stereotypes created by the tourist industry and further disseminated by the media throughout the world. These are the stereotypes of beautiful, exotic *hula* maidens; friendly beach boys; large (lazy), happy-go-lucky Hawaiians sleeping under palm trees and ukulele-strumming musicians - not the images of a people to be taken very seriously.

Greenwood contends that the transformation of cultures into extensions of the modern mass media is the price that must be paid for societies who depend on tourism earnings. MacCannell states that the end result is that the visitor is ultimately surrounded by a 'staged tourist space' from which there is no exit and is thus doomed to inauthenticity and fabrication.

Cohen deliberates that the majority of mass tourists do not aspire to much in the way of 'depth', and the 'staged' events that have an element of cultural flavouring usually suffice. Tourism is simply a leisure activity - a form of play with the added ingredients of imagination and make-believe transforming it into a form of 'living theatre'. The tourist willingly participates, pretending the contrived product is authentic. Feifer extends this argument further, suggesting that tourists know that there is no authentic experience to be had, and therefore delight in the trivial nature of the holiday environment,

'playfully' contributing to the overall deception.

MacCannell is critical of those resorts who 'come close to imprisoning their visitors by making the trip to town almost impossible to arrange or even more prohibitively expensive than the inflated charges for service within the resort compound. This kind of (plantation) tourism is exploitative on both sides: the tourist gets little for the money and local people do not see the money that is generated'.

The fact that people happen to live near the resort area is almost irrelevant to many visitors, resulting in the situation that very few participate in tourism as equal partners.

#### Conclusion

Native Hawaiians, according to the Mayor of Honolulu are 'peasants in paradise' and many of the more unpleasant features of the sociology of colonial situations are resurrected: local residents are denied access to their own beaches; people are given employment according to racial stereotypes, and humble service roles predominate. In the transition from the sugar cane field to the resort hotel lobby, the pattern remains essentially

the same, the result is what amounts to 'leisure and recreational imperialism'.

This myth created by tourism - a manufactured and trivial way of being, a form of travel that, according to Boorstin, has become emasculated and made 'safe' by commercialisation; it promotes indulgence and is packaged to prevent any real contact with others. The travel brochure and the hotel down-play local culture except perhaps to emphasise their 'primitiveness', and tourists are actively encouraged to believe the myth of an island paradise of unadulterated luxury, hedonistic pleasure and flowing hospitality. The Hawaiian holiday will therefore be judged on the created setting, the suspension of reality and the overall value for money it offers the participants. Perhaps the final voice should be left to a native Hawaiian:

"Tourists come to Hawai'i and complain because Hawai'i has changed. They changed it. Hotels were built for them. They come to Hawai'i to try things Hawaiian then pinch their noses at our foods, at our speech, at our attempts to be friendly. What about our needs? But that's all right. They take care of our most basic need... money. We laugh at them burning in the sun." ●

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# HISTORIO TOURISTICUS

## History Rewritten

KAPIL KUMAR

"This is the Qutab Minar. Qutubuddin destroyed twenty seven temples to construct it. Yes sir, twenty seven. See this board sir, Archaeological Survey of India". This is how the Minar was being introduced to tourists by our local guide, who further added, "about 5000 Brahmins died defending it and the river Yamuna became red. The mosque was built to celebrate the victory of the Muslims". Naturally, people flocked around him to hear this fantastic tale and see the ASI board.

Everyone has his or her own history to sell. History has always been open to different approaches, interpretations and ideologies. We have also heard about history or historians being biased. But here, one was witnessing the creation of a past that could become highly inflammable and create a divide that was never there.

Interestingly, after a few minutes, the same guide tells the mesmerised audience, "You know *sahib*, actually, this is not a minar built by Qutubuddin. It was built by Prithviraj Chauhan who wanted it to be an observatory. Samyukta, his wife used to climb it every evening to pray and lit a lamp here." The historian in me smiled for I knew I was about to corner him. I asked him loudly, "Well, if it was constructed by Prithviraj Chauhan, then it must have been him who destroyed the twenty seven temples and killed the Brahmins!"

"No sir, no sir, that was Qutubuddin", said the guide, protesting weakly. Despite the shock experienced by the audience, one man said sympathetically, "After all he has to do his *rozi dhanda* (daily business)

and tourists *do* like these stories".

During a visit to the Mehrangarh Fort at Jodhpur, the local guide insisted that a gun on display had been presented to the Rajput rulers by the Mughals 800 years back. Naturally, I had to tell him that the Mughals had not yet come to India that long ago. A write up in Umaid Bhawan Palace, Jodhpur, mentions that the earliest reference to the Rathors is to be found in the



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*Prithviraj Chauhan, then it must have been him who destroyed the twenty seven temples and killed the Brahmins!"*

Ashokan inscriptions. A Kashmiri hotelier thought he could push the idea of Jesus Christ's visit to Kashmir to attract Christian tourists from Europe. Another person intervened to suggest the possibility of putting up a board saying, 'Come for vacation where Christ had a vacation'!

It is a fact that tourism is an area where history is not only used but quite deftly created and sold as a commodity. Historians have themselves been a part of this process. However, there is no strong evidence of solid research in this area. Today, we need to be aware that misrepresentation of facts, especially those that exaggerate communal differences could further vitiate the situation.

Then there are instances where myths and legends are presented as pure history with virtually no evidence.

*Swagat*, the official magazine of Indian Airlines carried an article by Dr. Shivanand Nautiyal, entitled *Sailanto Ka Swarg* in a 1993 issue. Here he talks about Dodital. Nautiyal starts with the *puranic katha* (a legend from the epics) about the *tapasya* (meditation) of Ravana to win the strength of Mahadeva. All of a sudden, this legend becomes reality. The very spot where Ravana sat can be seen in Garhwal today and that it was on the *Chandrashila*

that he received the *Amog Astra* (divine weapon). Near Kedartal, he offered his sisters and daughters to Mahadeva and the *anchorias* of today are from that family. These *apsaras* stay near the *ials* (lakes) in Garhwal, particularly near Rudratal. This Rudratal is today's Dodital. All this, written with the greatest authority!

It is interesting to note how Nautiyal establishes the link between the Rudratal of the *puranas* and Dodital by way of a legend about 100 years old. A shepherd boy first saw this beautiful pond and when questioned about the name of it, he said, "Dhundital" (the pond that was



searched for and found). So Dhundital became Dodital which was the *puranic* Rudrata! History or legend?

The same issue of *Swagat* carried other articles which esoterised history. Examples: Idargarh in Gujarat was deserted because the queen went to *patal* (hell); Siddeshwar temple in Madhya Pradesh was lifted from some other place and located here. It is Bhima who is credited with the placing of the temple in such a way that the sun's rays came into the *garbhagriha* (sanctum sanctorum) till late evening. What about the poor architect who designed it thus, we wonder!

It is a fact that almost all promotional literature on tourism rarely distinguishes between history and mythology. Few and far are the occasions when the words, 'It is said' or 'It is believed' are incorporated. Another example: a guide tells a foreign tourist about Shah Jahan presenting a rose to his beloved Mumtaz as they sat together in the moonlight at the back of the Taj Mahal! The tourist smiles as he remembers (from his guide book) that the monument was built *after* her death.

I have experienced such 'living history' in many places. At Nandi Hills, I was told about Tipu Top, a place from where Tipu Sultan threw down people from the hill. At Dal Lake, in Kashmir, the Afghan governor, Azad Khan had a rare hobby of putting Hindu *pundits* in grass sacks and sinking them in the lake. This place has thus come to be called Bata Mazaar. Tourists may love these gory details, but it also allows for communal feelings to sink deep into their psyche.

The most recent example of this was seen in Ayodhya, where the government acquired land around the Babri Masjid in the name of tourism development. The brochure on Ayodhya (30,000 copies published in 1991-92) runs like this:

● Ram Janambhoomi: mentioned as Ram Kot or Durg.

● Kanak Bhavan was built by Dasharatha for Kaikeyee.

● Mani Porvat: where Hanuman rested.

'It describes Chitrakoot in a similar manner. Nowhere does the brochure mention these as being legends, myths or simply a matter of faith. It seems of little consequence that a few years back the pilgrim or tourist was shown

*The Taj is explained  
also in terms of  
architecture and the  
Jama Masjid  
remains Jama  
Masjid and not  
Jameswar Mandir!*



RIPIN KALRA

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at least ten different places as being the Ram Janambhoomi in Ayodhya. Also, it seems that the local *panwala* or barber is the custodian of historical information, in the absence of real historical projection by the government.

Tourism professionals argue that tourists, in fact, do not really object having the dividing line between history and myth erased, to add to their 'exotic' experience. According to them this is done all over the world. The guides, trained by the ASI, seem happy to move away from history into the realm of fantasies and imaginations. Here, one has to dwell a little on 'popular culture', the inclusion of which was greatly emphasised in the history writing of the eighties and nineties. However, popular culture cannot be assumed to be always progressive and impartial. The ideology of dominant groups does prevail and alters the flavour of peoples' cultures, sometimes calculatedly so.

However, this is not to say that history is always missing or distorted.

India is primarily a cultural destination and is visited for her rich heritage. Tour operators like SITA, Thomas Cook or TCI do recruit well trained guides who describe monuments in their totality. The Taj is explained also in terms of architecture and the Jama Masjid remains Jama Masjid and not Jameswar Mandir!

A close link needs to be reinforced between historians, tourist guides and tourism departments. In fact, tourism is the only area where history is 'operational' in the present context and distortions can have far reaching implications in shaping social realities.

We might soon have to witness a time when promoters of sex tourism will describe Wardha as a destination where Gandhi practised *brahmacharya*!



# THE TOURIST TRAP

MALCOLM BALDWIN

**M** I have almost forgotten what it's like to travel. I mean really travel - the outward journey of hope as a vehicle for the inner voyage of discovery. Over the past

two decades the European spirit of adventure has been progressively sanitised, packaged and marketed. However, one vivid memory is etched on my mind: it's made me realise there is a world of difference between the freedom of travel and the trap of tourism.

The 22nd of July, 1969, was hot. A wind, like the blast from a newly opened oven blew from the Sahara desert. My old Bedford van had been labouring painfully along the North African coast, through the monotonous, semi-arid scrubland of Algeria. It was with a sense of relief we began to climb towards the cooler temperature of a small plateau. We stopped for a drink of water, which even at this early hour of the morning, was made tepid by the searing heat from the south. Slices of melon moistened our parched mouths as we sat watching a few local people harvesting their cereal crops. Nearby was a threshing floor where two donkeys toiled in the dust and straw. The sight of two Europeans must have aroused the curiosity of the farmers. One of them, a very old man, put aside his bill-book and walked towards us. We gave him some melon which he gratefully accepted. Having looked around our van, he pointed towards the sky, and then in an extraordinary mixture of broken Spanish and French, proceeded to tell us that a man had landed on the moon. At first we wondered whether we had understood him properly, but on arrival in Algiers, there was no mistaking the headlines in the newspapers, even though they

were in Arabic!

It did seem in those heady optimistic days of the sixties that there was a new energy in the air, as if the prophesy of a global village was beginning to manifest itself. The younger generation dared to dream that the instruments of mass media, travel and communication would create a new understanding. We fondly imagined that a sumptuous mix of race, colour, language and culture would erase the mistakes of past generations. We could envisage a global culture where wealth would be evenly distributed, where literacy and medical care were the essential rights of each global citizen. We revelled in the wisdom of the East, the rhythms of Africa, the colour of Latin America; daring to imagine that every ethnic group would be revered and respected. We thought that travel held the key to this new understanding.

These were the ideas which fed my generation. I cannot claim they were uppermost in my mind when we reached Algiers, nor can I claim to have had a dramatic new insight when we drove into the capital city. We chanced to arrive during the first Pan-African festival of 1969. It was here I had my first direct experience of the dreadful legacy of colonialism. Bullet holes in nearly every building were a reminder of the bitter struggle against the French, which had ended only six years previously. Moreover there was a distinctly anti-European atmosphere pervading the festivities (hardly surprising, when one came face to face with the gross exploitation of the African continent, which had been taking place for more than a century). The mood of the crowd was not hard to gauge. The loudest cheers were not given to the Arab horsemen loosing volleys of rifle fire into the air, or to the graceful movements of the Senegalese dancers. It was a dishevelled group of South African miners shuffling past in resolute determination which won the rowdiest applause.

It soon became abundantly clear that the whole point of the festival was to mark the severance of connections with the colonialist past. Here was a new emergent force which was offering the people of Africa the opportunity to stand on their own two feet with



dignity and self respect. All that was more than twenty years ago, and a lot of water has flowed under the bridge since then. However, what none of us could have realised at the time, was that a new and more virulent strain of the colonialist virus was emerging. This time it was not elected governments or even military dictatorships which would lay claim to the power of exploitation, but multinational corporations, who owed allegiance to nothing but their own growth and profit.

In this march of 'progress', the tourist industry has become the vanguard of a new monocultural imperialism. The global village ideal has been replaced by the global supermarket. Our dreams have been hijacked by this new multi-billion dollar industry, employing over 112 million people, investing 350 billion dollars a year, and generating more than \$2,500,000,000,000 in gross output. This amounts to some 5.5% of the world's total gross national product. All tastes are catered for, whether it be the sunny beaches in the Caribbean, sexual encounters in Bangkok, or vomiting competitions in Benidorm.

Let's forget for a moment the ecological damage caused by tourists, forget the numerous ways in which millions of feet can wear away priceless heritage, forget the swift erosion and hideous patronage of ethnic minorities, surely for all its shortcomings the tourist industry must be of overall benefit to developing countries? Sadly, a glance at the facts reveal a different story. The hotel market is dominated by American multinational corporations who account for 13 of the 20 operators. Developing countries anxious to pay back national debts are sold the idea of tourism as a quick fix to earn foreign exchange. In Egypt for example, the tourist industry accounts for some 67% of export finance, thus making the economy highly vulnerable to the whim of the tourist market and the demands of terrorists who murder foreigners to destabilise the economy. Moreover much of the money spent in the South is unlikely to remain there - well over half 'leaks' back to the north, to the travel companies, and the providers of sophisticated services demanded by modern tourists.

The situation is further exacerbated

by the ease and speed with which the multinationals can move around the world using up resources as they go. Skilled negotiators play off the interests of one country against another in pursuit of profit. In the so-called 'free market economy', hard bargains are driven which bring little comfort to the indigenous population. Kaleo Patterson reports from Hawaii that many people would rather host a missile site than a further influx of multinational hotels. When hurricane Iniki swept over the islands at 200 miles an hour, many of the locals breathed a

*After all, the journey, the pilgrimage, the holy day (holiday) are the common property of all cultures.*

*Now our dreams have been stolen by faceless men in grey suits and repackaged as glossy brochures.*

sigh of relief that there would be a brief respite from tourists!

Much tourist industry activity amounts to a tragedy of gigantic proportions. After all, the journey, the pilgrimage, the holy day (holiday) are the common property of all cultures. Now our dreams have been stolen by faceless men in grey suits and repackaged as glossy brochures. At the same time it cannot be denied that when Thomas Cook took his first party of travellers up the Nile in 1869, he set in motion a movement which has done more to promote world understanding than any peace accord. In this century, Billy Butlin gave many British city dwellers

their first glimpse of the sea, and the freedom to breathe fresh air. The tragedy of tourism is that it destroys the very thing that people seek to enjoy - the beautiful unspoilt beach can quickly be ruined by hotel development. National monuments, which have survived centuries of invasion and counter invasion, can be pounded to dust by tourists in a very short space of time.

Clearly, tourism has become an industry which needs to clean up its act in a very dramatic way. The first aim must be to wrest power from the multinationals and put money back in the local economy where it belongs. In addition, we need to be alert to the insidious progress of monoculturalism: as tourism grows more sophisticated, it will be the differences between places which make them desirable, not their similarities. At a national level, tourist activity needs very careful planning and regulation, otherwise it is apt to go out of control. Any plan should give priority to the needs of local people, making sure that additional food, water, and sewage demand can be adequately met within the region. Tourists themselves need a code of conduct, which includes making sure their money is spent with small, local operators and using public transport wherever possible. They should behave like guests rather than colonizers. They should take only photographs (where appropriate), and leave only footprints.

These are just some of the measures which urgently need consideration to control the worst excesses of the tourist industry. The ultimate tragedy would be that an unregulated free market would so homogenise the world that travelling would become a pointless activity. If your backyard looks like my backyard, all I can drink is Coca-Cola, and there's a McDonald's on every corner, we might just as well stay at home. ●

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## FROM MADRIGAL TO DIRGE



## THE STORY OF KOVALAM

T.G. JACOB

*Kovalam is the only 'developed' tourist enclave in Kerala. Within a period of twenty five years, this tiny coastal village in the southernmost part of Kerala, in South India has emerged as one of the major international tourist centres, attracting more than 65,000 foreign tourists every season. It is but natural that any serious investigation into the desirability or undesirability of tourism in Kerala as a development panacea, should first analyse these changes.*

**K**ovalam's brief history as a tourist commodity has changed the social, economic and political dynamics of this village irretrievably.

From the government's point of view, the reasons for promoting tourism are very simple. Though Kerala is a resource rich state, the level of industrialisation is abysmally low. Unemployment is a major problem with both the agricultural and industrial sectors offering little scope for further absorption of labour. Kerala's resources are mainly exported - this includes skilled labour too. Kerala depends on outside sources for more than 60% of its food requirements and more than 90% of industrially produced consumer goods. In this background of near bankruptcy, commercial tourism is proclaimed as the solution for all the economic ills as it promises sufficient employment, development of infrastructure, a higher standard of living

for people and generating much needed foreign exchange. When critics have pointed out in the mass media that the highly developed tourism industry in South East Asia and Goa has ushered in a host of social, economic and environmental problems, the proponents of tourism in Kerala have claimed that they will, in some mysterious fashion, be able to eliminate these negative impacts. These enthusiasts have much to learn out of Kovalam's journey, from sleepy village to jetsetter's paradise.

#### The past

Thirty years back Kovalam could be called a coconut village. The coconut brought together small and medium landowners and wage labour in the tending, plucking, processing and coir weaving activities. There was scope for developing coconut related small industries and the village community was gradually evolving towards a value



added economy. Fishing in Kovalam was a marginal economic activity in contrast to Vizhinjam, a bustling fishing village, two kilometers away. But Kovalam's little fish, caught from its clear, unpolluted water were tastier. Kovalam's geography and topography is fascinating. The rock here, known as Krishna Shila, is fine and is bluish green, forming hills and ravines, covered by a slender, yet highly fertile layer of top soil. Lush green vegetation grows on it.

Politically, local power was rooted in the local economy and governance, the *panchayat*. Accumulation of capital was occurring locally through trading and other coconut related activities. This village of around 2000 households was well in contact with the main centres of commercial and industrial activity in the state through trading of copra, oil and coir yarn products. It was also catering to the coir demand from Vizhinjam.

#### The present

All this has changed owing to the development of tourism in the region.

#### Composition of tourists

Initially, the tourists searching for a tropical paradise, stayed with local households with minimum expenditure, communicating with the simple fisherfolk in their own backpacker style. Word of the 'goodies' of Kovalam - cheap good food, lodging and marijuana and the safe beach got around and the hordes began to descend. Naturally, the state, with visions of foreign exchange, pitched in. The Ashok Beach Resort was opened by the ITDC and then a three star hotel by the KTDC. Five star tourism had arrived and with it, the cordoning off of the beach against public use, in front of the Ashok Resort. By 1987, the foreign tourist inflow had crossed 50,000. The beach became a teeming bazaar for food, drink, drugs (hard ones by now) and the usual exotics.

Interestingly, the ITDC hotel houses more Indians than foreigners. Top bureaucrats, politicians and contractors seem to haunt the place in order to avail of its 'attractions'. On the other hand, several exclusive, high cost small establishments with limited rooms operate only for foreigners. Surya Samudra is one such place. Thus we see the conversion of small hoteliers into real



*Traditional local occupations.*



*The structure of a luxury hotel demolished by high tide.*

estate agents who are financed by foreigners to construct cottages on the coast. The profit for the hotelier comes from renting the place when the foreigner is not in station.

As a focus for internal tourism, Kovalam was never very famous since tropical inhabitants hardly saw any meaning in lying around in the sun, doing little else. But with the Hawva beach now pandering to nude tourism, domestic voyeurism has increased with busloads of people dropping in for a 'view'.

#### Racist?

Why do we go to watch the 'naked white skin'? One reason is that we are culturally different and it is a novelty. Local children from poor families hang around asking for alms, offer to show tricks and sell peanuts or shells. Not seldom are they beaten for being there and spoiling the visitors' precious moments of hedonism. Discerning Indians have very often observed an obvious dollar superiority even in a simple act such as ordering a cup of tea.

### Prostitution

Not enough has been written about prostitution in Kovalam which is rampant. Aavaad Thurai, now called Hawva beach by the tourists, is famous for its nudity. 'Specialised hotels' have sprung up near it, offering various 'services', not only by girls from Kerala, but also from neighbourhood states. Male prostitution, though not overtly publicised, is very much a part of the Kerala sunlust tourism. 50% of foreign tourists are women and their targets are drug peddlers, guides, waiters etc. It is not unusual to see a young local boy striking it rich after a few of these encounters.

### Drugs

Kovalam is now a well developed drug market. There are many 'white dens' all over the coast. The highlands of Kerala grow a variety of high quality cannabis. It is reported that there are mini-factories in the deep jungles of Idukki district where experiments are conducted to combine it with chemicals for higher potency. The media has implicated the active complicity of senior excise officials both in the manufacture and marketing of drugs. A police official was recently arrested in connection with a large heroin haul meant for the New Year's Eve festivities in Kovalam.



*Breaking granite by the roadside. Makes for a good tourist picture?*

A fall out of this major demand for drugs in Kovalam is the 'employment' that local youth have found in peddling them. And then there is the problem of an alarming rise in smack addiction. Crime, it is well known is a close friend of narcotics and is now rampant in Kovalam.

Interestingly, no tourist has been jailed for drug-related offenses, though it is well known that many of them operate as dealers, using local boys as pushers.

### Whither traditional occupations?

The growth of tourism has indirectly affected interrelated patterns of employment, real estate prices and land use. The traditional occupations of coconut cultivation, coir-based industry and small scale fishing are no longer pre-eminent. Land prices have skyrocketed at least ten times within the last ten years as the tourism industry has spread geographically. The name of the game is now speculation. In the frenzied buying and selling of prime land, particularly along beach areas, land ownership has shifted into the hands of non-Kovalams and the earlier emphasis on its productive use has suffered a serious and permanent setback.

In this process, hundreds of people have been displaced from their traditional occupations. Tourism, as is popularly believed, comes nowhere near to addressing this problem of unemployment, since the better jobs go to more educated outsiders. What is left for the locals is menial jobs or worse, the downward spiral into drug peddling

and similar undesirable activities.

The only traditional occupation that has thrived under these circumstances is stone quarrying. Land that once provided a steady and continuous income from agriculture has been permanently lost to quarrying which gives quick and high returns. Deep, ugly pits scar the earth. With the growing demand for the high quality Krishna Shila stone, a large number of women and children, displaced from their agricultural occupations, now work in stone quarries, breaking rocks in scorching sun or rain. They are paid a pittance for their labour, as compared to agricultural wages. Their poverty, it would seem, is yet another sightseeing 'attraction' for tourists.

### Exclusivity - Whose beach is it anyway?

Judicially speaking, the beach is public property where people in general come to enjoy the fresh, invigorating air, where the productive activity of fishing is done and boats are beached. However, as has happened with Kovalam, this idyllic situation is drastically altered when international tourism steps in. And gradually, there is no room anymore for local residents. Thus, even without being formally designated as a Special Tourist Area, Kovalam has become an exclusive tourist enclave.

### Linguistic corruption

Language is the quintessence of a people's culture. Kerala which has the highest literacy rate in the country, is now faced with illiteracy of a curious nature in Kovalam. Young boys and

*Left: A deep granite quarry getting deeper.*



girls who serve the tourist trade have evolved a peculiar language - a mix of English, Malayalam, Tamil and Hindi that is devoid of grammar and syntax.

Tourists who enjoy this polyglot language, mimic and therefore, unthinkingly promote its usage even more. While this may seem a laughing matter, it is not so, for it cuts at the very roots of the culture of the people.

#### Vizhinjam - a profile

Vizhinjam is a densely populated, large fishing village two kms. away from Kovalam. Many new tourist resorts are being developed beyond this village, so that it is now enveloped on both sides of the beach by luxury resorts.

The fish caught from Vizhinjam supplies the city and is exported through Kochi and Tuticorin ports. The economy is backward in the sense that apart from catching fish, there is no related, value adding economic activity such as a processing plant. Twenty years ago, the government started constructing a modern fishing harbour. A wave energy project was also begun. After huge sums of money were spent on these projects, they were suddenly and inexplicably dumped. And the same government is now talking about spending thousands of crores for promoting tourism!

In the meanwhile, living conditions in Vizhinjam are pathetic. Clean, potable water is non-existent. A river, 6 kms. away serves as a bathing spot. There is no sewage to speak of. A dirty stream flowing through this village serves as a drain while the same water is used for washing and sometimes, even for cooking. Epidemics often break out during the monsoons resulting in high child mortality. Educational and medical facilities are grossly inadequate.

Can tourism give Vizhinjam a new lease of life? In the light of the Kovalam experience, the answer it would seem, is a sad no. But no one is listening.

*T. G. Jacob is a writer, having done research in Political Economy from the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. His publications include India: Development and Deprivation and Chaos in Nation Formation: The Case of Punjab. Jacob lives in Thiruvananthapuram and works as the General Editor of Odyssey Publications. Photographs: Pradeep Chandra Kumar*

## BEKAL

### Will the project take off?

K. KUNHIKRISHNAN

**B**EKAL. The largest fort in Kerala, located near Kanhangad in Kasaragod district, is proposed to be developed into a tourist development complex at an estimated cost of Rs. 1,000 crores. The magnificent fort which is nearly 16 hectares in extent virtually juts into the sea with a beautiful bay on its southern side. The natural scenery around the fort is alluring and a visit to the fort is memorable.

The proposed Rs. 1,000 crores tourist development complex envisages a large number of structures retaining the rural background of the area. The project is initially to be set up in an area of 500 hectares, but future plans place it in an extent of 3,000 hectares. The project comprises restoration of the fort, a cultural centre with demonstration halls and an auditorium for the traditional arts of Kerala, a martial arts centre, an international centre for yoga and Ayurveda, an aquarium, a museum of Kerala history and culture, light and sound programmes, gardens and park.

Another plan is the development of the serene backwaters along the two kilometre long stretch on the south where boat races and rowing competitions are to be held. Besides, water skiing, wind surfing and other water sports are also proposed along with golf. An international convention centre, cottage industries and handicrafts marketing centre, botanical gardens and a variety of other developmental entertaining activities are envisaged in the masterplan.

Seven hotels are to be constructed and on completion, they will have a capacity of nearly 3,000 rooms, within three and five star ranges.

But whether this dream will ever materialise is a question that agitates many a mind. Implementation of the project entails the displacement of

nearly 2,000 families; the proposed area also houses a few schools, temples and mosques. Besides, an area of more than 40 ha now used for seasonal tobacco cultivation will have to be utilised for construction purposes which will leave some tobacco cultivators jobless. The others to be rehabilitated are fishermen, who might willingly move to other areas.

But there are other apprehensions among the local people. First and foremost is the development of undesirable social aspects that are incremental to tourism, like excessive use of alcohol and illicit drugs which will threaten the very fabric of the local social ethos as it has happened in a few other tourist complexes which received so much media blitzkrieg. In fact, a section of the local population has vociferously raised this point. This is an issue of the possible erosion in cultural values, as it has happened elsewhere.

Another point worth considering is the setting up of accommodation or hotel rooms for those who cannot afford the three star rates. Cheap and clean accommodation within the affordable limits of the common visitor is something which the planners of such projects conveniently ignore. Once a tourist spot is beyond the limits of an ordinary tourist, some sort of an in-built antipathy is bound to develop, which, in the long run, is not conducive to the healthy growth of a tourist spot.

While a sizeable section of the local population is looking forward to their long cherished dream of a tourism project becoming a reality, there is an equally vociferous party which opposes it tooth and nail. Who will have the last laugh?

Courtesy: *The Hindu*  
June 20th 1993.



# TOURISM NEEDS ECO-EDUCATION

SUNITA RAO

*What would the world be, once bereft  
Of wet and wildness? Let them be left,  
O let them left, wildness and wet,  
Long live the weeds and the  
wilderness yet.*

- Gerard Manley Hopkins

*'In the promotion of Wilderness Tourism, are we merely talking of figures - the numbers of tourists received, and the amount of profit earned - or are we talking of some sort of qualitative progress?'*

-Anuradha Vashist  
*The Pioneer*

Many animals and plants, have had 'travel' built into their genetic maps long before humankind. Birds migrating from their colder northern haunts to warmer southern climes for winter and then going back, and whales swimming to warmer seas to feed and breed, are some examples which come to mind easily. Seeds fly, float in water, and grab passing creatures to somehow ensure they 'get around' and establish themselves in new areas. These wildlife travellers are no seekers of pleasure. They are part of that great cycle of life, where nothing is done without reason. When the seasonal or hormonal clock so bids, certain activities have to be done.

The destinations of mass tourists have changed in the last few decades. Wilderness areas have entered the market, and thus inevitably, people's consciousness. Forests, lakes, beaches, mountains ....these constitute increasingly popular tourist destinations. A few dozen of India's 500 national parks and sanctuaries have been facing sharply rising numbers of visitors. The city of Delhi illustrates 'tourism-itis' very well. Not of people coming in, but Delhites themselves getting out. Come holiday season and most wildlife/outdoor resorts within a radius of 300 kms. of Delhi are booked to capacity. Keoladeo National Park (Bharatpur), Corbett National Park and Sariska Tiger Reserve are hotspots.

What effect do tourists have on these areas, and vice versa? Ultimately, this depends almost exclusively on how the tourists are 'managed'.

Take a typical evening at the Government tourist establishment in Sariska Tiger Reserve. The mood warms up as the liquor begins to flow. I have been witness to raucous, bawdy displays by inebriated hooligans from the capital. These city kingpins turned jungle warlords are extravagant with their unspent energy and money. Not even a talking to by the Park Director works. Music plays loudly. Shouts and laughter compete with the digital output. The

*Strict guidelines in Corbett National Park ensure a minimum impact tourism, while allowing for maximum wildlife viewing opportunities.*



*When one has to deal  
with political powers  
and vested interests,  
carrying capacity  
values can double or  
treble overnight with  
the mere scratch of a  
pen across a dotted  
line.*

indecent cacophony carries far and loud into the night. And even the wild boar - those hardy creatures who boldly come close to human habitation in the night to scavenge - are scared and run away grunting.

A sample from the same population of Delhi behaves differently in Corbett National Park, because of the different options they are offered. Day visitors are allowed only along one road upto a certain point in the buffer zone. They have to leave by sunset. People staying overnight have to make bookings in advance, ride through the park to the tourist complex and settle in. No more than the number the complex can take is allowed in. The approach is different and definitely not handed to you on a platter. In turn the response of the tourist is generally austere. One that is certainly more reverential of the surrounding wild.

Why this difference, one wonders. Can the same tourist's behaviour be manipulated through external factors? I personally believe that in each of us, irrespective of class and money power, is the potential to be an environment-sensitive tourist. Whether this happens or not depends on management systems in wilderness areas specifically, and of course, the sort of tourism policies that the Government sets. The basic training, that wildlife tourism is significantly different and needs to be handled differently is probably never imparted to its officials.

Attracting people to nature reserves has positive fallouts other than the obvious economic one. Besides relaxing while vacationing, the tourist is also undergoing a subtle process



*Wandering in the wilderness is a very enriching experience for young people.*



*Caution regarding the number of motor boats while birdwatching in a wetland prevents disturbance and water pollution.*

of learning. The sort of stimulus a person experiences, influences what she/he learns. It could be as simple as getting up very early in the morning and waiting quietly to watch and hear a flock of cranes taking off. This was what happened at the Bhindawas Bird Sanctuary (Haryana) recently. A senior government official who was also part

of the group was quite simply awed by the whole experience. In the process, he quietly learned that there was no need to play music in the sanctuary as he had wanted to earlier. He also retrieved a tetrapak which he had carelessly thrown there.

More elaborate inputs for the wilderness tourist could involve

multi-media museums, nature trails with signposts, and souvenirs that speak about the flora-fauna and importance of the place visited. The Kanha National Park (Madhya Pradesh) where the Centre for Environment Education, Ahmedabad, has set up an interpretation centre is one such example in India. Of course, how much of all this the tourist actually absorbs is yet to be evaluated.

To make tourism in wilderness areas environmentally viable, two vital issues are to be considered. The first is that government policy should not go overboard in allowing too many areas to be opened up for tourism, with all the infrastructure that inevitably follows. At the same time, this does not mean doing things *janata* style. Good, efficient facilities need not necessarily cast an only-for-the-elite aura. They could very well be conservation-oriented. The emphasis here is on the number of such places and the amount of tourist impact that should be allowed.

Each area or kind of tourist spot should have strict guidelines for its operation, including certain do's and don'ts for the tourists. All of these may justifiably sound like piped dreams, but efforts have to be exercised in this direction if anything at all is to be achieved.

The second and more intangible issue in creating minimum impact tourism is environmental education and resource literacy. This should start from school itself. Children thus exposed and sensitized often carry these experiences and thoughts into adulthood. Having accompanied school students to wildlife areas myself, I feel that the experience creates a long-lasting impression, far more powerful than months of sterile, classroom teaching.

India, fortunately, still has places that are not typical tourist hangouts. One can visit many such areas and get a keen pleasure from being part of the wider cosmos without intruding into it. I remember trekking and camping in the Mukurthi area of the Nilgiris during my college days. No fancy gear, just what we had put together from the local Army surplus store. One just walked or hiked with no particular plan in mind. A pack of wild dogs may suddenly hurtle across your path, or you may



*Above & below: Environmental education at the school level goes a long way in fostering an eco-friendly attitude*



bend over to examine the pellets of a Nilgiri *tahr* (mountain goat), and eventually you would (with the help of an old map that somebody's grandfather had given him) climb up to reach the peak and peer down the steep slope on the other side, with the lush, evergreen forests of Kerala far below.

The old facility of being able to 'take off' should continue. But one dirty habit, cultivated of late, should be

kicked in the face - that of exhibiting through the media, some obscure, untouched place that one may know about or have visited. That often becomes the beginning of the end of that place.

How long places will remain unknown is another question altogether. Tourism barons are becoming increasingly more visible. The story of Goa is an old one. The island of Diu is now being developed for heavy duty



tourism. The debate about five-star hotels being sanctioned in Orissa, after denotifying Balukhand sanctuary, is heating up. The Himalayas now contain some of the world's highest garbage dumps, the legacy of large scale trekking and climbing parties. Ladakh, Lahaul-Spiti, the North-East, the Andaman Islands... areas which contain our last, large, natural habitats and intact cultures are now being prised open.

One way to promote a vested interest in an ecologically sensitive area that is facing tourism pressure is to get the local communities involved. Using local knowledge in the running of a place is a viable option. Tribals and other local communities employed as guides or watchers in forest areas are continuing a primary interaction with their environment, while getting employment as well. It is, however, critical that they have control over the process,

and are not reduced to wage labour at the mercy of government agencies or private profiteers. At all times, it is vital to ensure that their own rights and needs are given preference over the needs of tourists.

The important issue of how much tourist pressure a place can withstand still remains. The classical concept of carrying capacity refers to the maximum amount of use by a certain population that a system can take, while maintaining a dynamic equilibrium. This is a notoriously difficult concept to use in the case of tourism, because when everything is artificially managed, it is easy to manipulate how much a system can take. When one has to deal with political powers and vested interests, carrying capacity values can double or treble overnight with the mere scratch of a pen across a dotted line.

E.F. Schumacher, author of *Small is*

*Beautiful*, was a wise man indeed. Finally, perhaps the way to eco-friendly tourism would be clear if we reconsidered our roots, and did things on a small enough scale to make it beautiful for a long, long time to come for many, many people. Remember, he wrote the book after a visit to India, in which he recognised the value of local level innovations and solutions that Indian communities had evolved over centuries. India's tourism promoters would do well to look at these roots. ●

*Sunita Rao works with Kalpavriksh, a Delhi based environmental NGO. Her current area of work is environmental education.*

*Photographs: Ashish Kothari*

## TOURISM STUDIES THE IGNOU PROGRAMME

**T**ourism remains an under developed discipline in the educational system, not only from the point of view of training human resources, but also for creating mass awareness and local participation.

Tourism personnel are dispersed all over the country, beyond the reach of training institutions. Here, the Distance Learning System (DLS) has a major role to play. The IGNOU (The Indira Gandhi National Open University) has a significant infrastructure and unconventional multi-media package to reach out to learners according to their place and convenience. One is never too old to join the

University which offers a curriculum that is the same for all and does away with elitism in education. With over 230 Study Centres and 106 Regional Centres, the University will be able to cater to a vast section of learners, whether skilled or unskilled.

What does the IGNOU mean by Tourism Awareness Programmes? By that it does not mean educating the masses about what tourism is. Awareness has to take into account what tourism means to them in terms of their day to day life and the impact it has on their social, economic or environmental surroundings. An inter-disciplinary approach would be adopted for the development of the entire programme.

The above ideas as well as a course curriculum have been developed by the History Faculty, School of Social Sciences, IGNOU, under Prof. Kapil Kumar. The course on Tourism Studies 1994-95 has already been launched in 106 Regional Centres from March 1994. For more information contact:

History Faculty  
School Of Social Sciences  
IGNOU  
Maidan Garhi  
New Delhi - 110068.

# GOLF

## THE DARK SIDE OF THE 'GREEN' GAME

*Golf courses are windows into the world.  
They are the greatest tourist attractions  
and attract tremendous interest. Anyone who says they destroy  
natural vegetation, absorb too much water or deprive people  
from earnings from their land, don't know  
what they are talking about.*

*(Bangkok Post 2.12.1990)*

*Jack Nicklaus, world famous golfer and golf course designer*

*A golf course is a green desert.  
Kuji Tsutomu, Japanese specialist*

Golf course development the world over has mushroomed into a multibillion dollar industry that has gone far beyond the sport. So great is the demand for the game that Japanese developers are now seeking cheaper land abroad in South and South East

Asia. Golf course constructions continue to spread in areas like Europe, Oceania, the Pacific Islands and Central America.

Simultaneously, there has been an upsurge of protests from environmentalists and tourism activists in many of

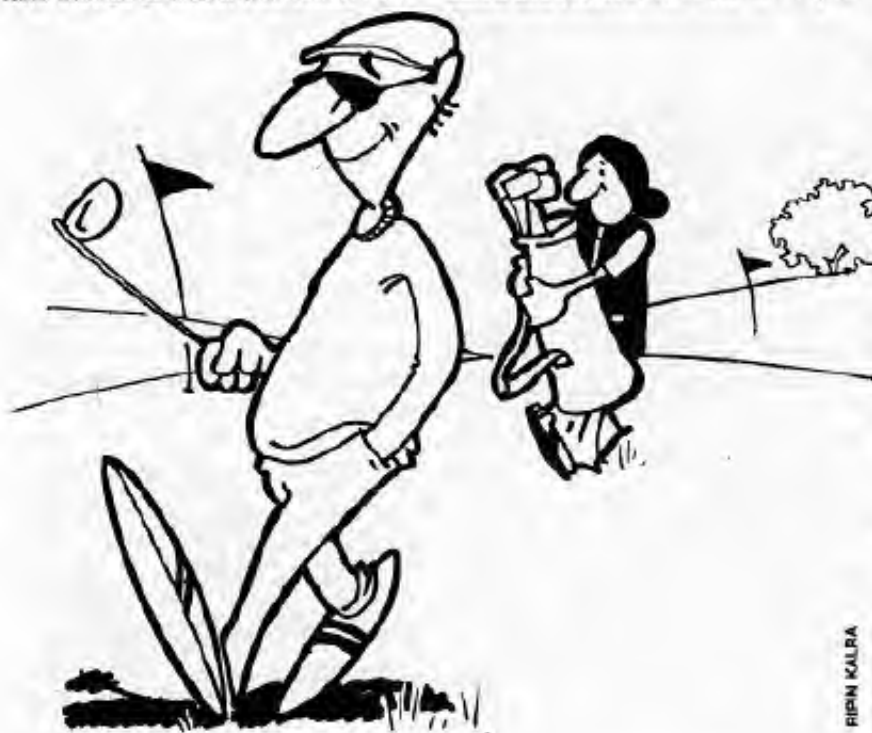
these countries. The Global Network for Anti-Golf Course Action (GNAGA), organized in 1992 in Japan, aims to network with anti-golf activists and raise world wide public awareness on this issue. On April 23, 1993, 'World No Golf Day' was observed on GNAGA's anniversary.

What could possibly be wrong with this game that sports a 'green', environment-friendly tag? Virtually everything, it seems.

Topping the list of problems is, ironically, the environment itself. The damages include the effects of hazardous chemicals used as fertilisers and pesticides, the massive drain on water supplies and the destruction of forests, farms and communities. Case studies have shown that the environmental impact is greatest on local people, wildlife, catchment areas and marine environment. In the Hiroshima township on the Japanese island of Hokkaido, golfers, green keepers and residents living near the township's seven courses have suffered from allergic rhinitis and chronic rashes. In addition, the incidence of asthma in the town is five times the island's average. According to surveys by Professor Takao Kanimatsu of Shiga Prefectural College, the concentration of agricultural chemicals in water bodies can multiply after rainfall to as much as 200 to 300 times the normal levels. One such incident occurred in November 1989, after the Sapporo Kokusai Country Club in Hiroshima sprayed an organic copper compound to keep the grass from rotting under snow in winter. When it rained, the chemical was washed into the water system, and more than 90,000 trout and other fish perished. At GNAGA's first international conference on Resort and Golf Course Development in the Asia-Pacific Region in Penang, Malaysia, in April 1993, the participants concluded:

*The 'green' golf package can be compared to the Green Revolution package in agriculture. Golf courses are in fact another form of monoculture, where exotic soil and grass, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides and weedcides, as well as machinery are all imported to substitute natural ecosystems.*

Commenting on some of the socio-



RISHI KALRA

economic impacts of golf course development, the GNAGA conference also pointed out:

*Everywhere, the golf industry aggressively promotes an elitist and exclusive life-style for the wealthy urban population at the expense of the environment and the weaker members of society.*

In Malaysia, the rainforest reserve of Teluk Data in Langkawi Island has been logged to make way for the Datar Bay Golf Club, said to be one of Prime Minister Mahathir's favourite projects. Soil erosion and siltation of the sea threaten the whole beach area near the golf resort. Significant fishing grounds have already been destroyed, leaving traditional fishermen without livelihood. In the case of the mega-resort project on Pulau Redang, off Terengganu (Malaysia), the developers plan to relocate 1000 local people as they are considered 'unsightly' for tourists.

And in Indonesia, a joint venture allegedly involving a member of the Suharto family and Japanese investors, is set to construct a luxurious golf resort at Murapi Mountain near Yogyakarta, while more and more local people are forced to leave for Sumatra in the framework of the government's transmigration programme.

tion programme.

Contrary to advertisements, golf course developments have rarely benefited the local economy. Instead most of the profits are reaped by foreign investors and multinationals. In many Asian countries, huge amounts of tax money have been spent on diverting water to golf courses and building new roads in remote areas, thus benefiting a few rich tourists, while citizens do not have basic necessities like clean water and public transportation.

Corruption and crime cast a long shadow over golf course development. ANTENNA, (Asian Tourism Action Network) reports that 'As a result of the new anti-yakuza law in Japan, gangster syndicates increasingly export their business practices to Hawaii and other countries... as many as fifty Hawaiian properties were bought with yakuza money, among them the luxurious Turtle Bay Hotel including a golf course and another prominent Oahu golf resort. ANTENNA also reports on one of Japan's largest golf course developing companies, Sato Kogyo, '...numerous destructive and illegal developments by Sato Kogyo have been exposed by local people... citizens' groups have formed an Anti-Sato-Kogyo

network...GNAGA has proposed to monitor the unlawful practices of Sato Kogyo worldwide and to lobby governments not to give contracts to Sato Kogyo.'

In Thailand, 'in 1992, it was discovered that the Golden Valley Golf and Country Club had encroached on and dynamited a state-owned hill at Khao Yai National Park. The scandal unfolded when photographs appeared in the newspapers, showing Jack Nicklaus, the golf course designer of Golden Valley, disembarking from an Air Force helicopter which had been used for an aerial tour to inspect the golf course. The close linkages between the golfing lobby and high-ranking military officials... could no longer be denied.'

Anita Pleumarom, a representative of ANTENNA, sums up the many troubled aspects of golf course development thus:

'The big losers are local people whose government agencies neglect the social and environmental costs of superfluous golf resorts and even subsidise this fickle business by spending tax money for golf course promotion.'

(Compiled with extracts from ANTENNA's newsletter *Headline and EQUATIONS* ANLetter)



PIPPI KALPA



# RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

## AN EXPERIMENT

RANJIT HENRY

*Alternative tourism is a process which promotes a just form of travel between members of different communities. It seeks to achieve mutual understanding, solidarity and equality among participants. The following article is the story of an experiment to implement as benign a travel philosophy as is possible in today's world.*

*Until lions have their own historian  
histories of the hunt will glorify the hunter  
- African proverb*



It is my firm belief, that travel and tourism have the capability to usher in a long overdue multipolar, multicultural world, where no single philosophy, no single belief, can shunt aside the extreme wealth of humankind's cultural heritage. Indeed, the future of the world depends on this enlarged freedom for the multisocial and polycultural to express itself in a world of shifting power centres.

With this as our faith, we began Kolam Tours in 1989, vowing to tread lightly on Mother Earth, to work towards a people-oriented, culturally sensitive and eco-aware travel culture.

We began by offering our services to organisations outside the mainstream mass tourist industry or those marginal

to it. Our tour company is small, with no intentions to expand. All tours are tailor-made to suit specific requirements and are led by me.

A tour typically ranges from ten days to four weeks. In any tourist encounter, the social relationship between tourist and host is handicapped by its transitory, superficial and unequal nature, making it the perfect breeding ground for deceit, mistrust and dishonesty. We endeavour to make our travellers aware of these constraints and challenges; to avoid stereotyped behaviour, which reinforces the baggage of prejudice carried by both sides, while uninvited guest and nameless host experience real situations from begging and overcharging to the stubborn neo-colonial outlook.

We examine the ultimate, touristic moral fantasy, based on the desire to

deny the relationship between profit and exploitation, where one is led to pretend that everyone gets richer, 'we' economically and 'they' experientially, by getting something for nothing! These are some of the issues that concern us deeply.

Our main client is Traidcraft Exchange, a Christian charity-linked alternative trading organisation based in England, which promotes and purchases consumer products and handicrafts directly from villages, co-operatives and non-governmental organisations in the Third World. These products are sold through their mail-order service and voluntary representative schemes throughout UK, thereby eliminating the middleman and ensuring a fair price for the producer; profit is not the driving force of their efforts.

As part of their awareness-raising programme, Traidcraft offers a 3-week alternative tour to Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, grants its supporters a chance to visit some of these villages, meet as many Indians as possible and savour

*While observing the  
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live mode operating behind  
the apparent 'chaos'  
among people, vehicles  
and animals.*



# KOLAM

responsible tours & soft travel

H37/2, TNHB Flats, Gita Apartments, Kalakshetra Colony, Besant Nagar, Madras-600 090, India  
Phone: (044) 491 3404 Fax: 91 44 94 4444 - KOLAM (Int)

the arts and cuisine of India.

We have organised tours for six such groups from 1990 to date. All too often their conclusions, after a few days, are that India and Indians are so different from their pre-conceived, media-created images. While observing the 'chaotic' traffic, for instance, many were able to grasp the strong, unselfconscious sense of intuitive interconnection, a give and take, the constant equilibrium shift; all based not on any 'rules' but rather on a live-and-let-live mode operating behind the apparent 'chaos' among people, vehicles and animals.

To quote one of our women tourists, "Before I came to India, I thought rather patronisingly, poor India, so many people and such poverty, with only democracy as a plus point. Now that I know something about their problems, they are the same as ours, but only on a larger scale as befits a larger country... how do you enable the voiceless majority to be heard against the vocal minority? The problem is the same in both countries. And, India is a place with a history that makes ours seem insignificant."

From another tourist, "In the spring of 1989, I realised my life's ambition of visiting India when I chose a package tour to North India for two weeks from a major tour agency. We were treated to five-star hotel accommodation, totally unexpected at the price paid and totally unnecessary. I wouldn't dream and couldn't possibly afford to stay in similar hotels in UK and although they were luxurious, one could have been in any European hotel in any major city of the world. But this was India, said to be a poor country! The food in these hotels was mainly western, quite bland and very expensive, and the only people one met were other tourists. We were only taken to tourist attractions where we were hassled incessantly and only to shops where the prices were rigged and the tour guide got his percentage. Everywhere we went, we were pressurised to buy, treated purely as a source of income while the guides were doing their duty yet again with no real enthusiasm or interest. I returned home with my children... generally disappointed all round." Thus the typical mass tourism trend that most succumb



to worldwide and yet convince themselves that they had a grand vacation. She concludes, "However, I felt sure that there was another side to India... if anyone told me that the Traidcraft tour in the winter of 1990 that I was taking would be one of the most interesting, busy, rewarding and worthwhile times of my life, I doubt that I would have believed it. This was the 'other India' that I was looking for and I feel privileged to have experienced it..."

Our only other clients are from Sweden - from Las och Res, Study and Travel, a one-man company very successfully run for the last five years or so. Their four week tour covers Tamil Nadu mostly and sometimes includes Kerala and Karnataka. The highlight of their tour, in their own opinion, almost always, is their two-night stay in three villages (we limit the stay to 2-3 persons per home, for two nights only, to avoid disruption of village life and do not visit the same village more than three times).

In the village, the host speaks no English. All sleep on the floor on mats given by the host family (we bar the group from using their fancy sleeping bags). No private rooms are provided. The tourists eat the same vegetarian food of the host family, using their fingers and sitting on the floor. Tap water is not available, hence they visit the nearby well or tank for washing and use outdoor toilets, with separate areas

demarcated for men and women. Most of the guests found these aspects the most interesting part of the tour, with a few establishing a relationship with their hosts to help them economically, in some personal way.

Lastly, after the tour is over, we keep in touch with as many of our tourists as possible. About 10% of them write back to us regularly. In response, we can only say we are more than gratified to note the emergence of a different kind of tourist which grants us the confidence to carry on, to allow for a dialogue of visions, so to speak. We are also encouraged to observe the rejection of the ultimate goal of international tourism - the homogenisation of all cultures by making a world standard of bourgeois comfort, where the Third World is coaxed to set up sedentary housekeeping, so that the tourist, the modern nomad, can roam around widely without losing his assumed place and identity - by never really leaving 'home'. It is to such persons, who we hope are growing in legions, that we address our tours.

*Ranjit Henry worked for an American multinational company for ten years soon after graduating in Chemistry. He began Kolam Solidarity Exposure Tours in 1989.*

The first time I heard of this place was over drinks, in a pub in London's West End. I was discussing Calcutta with an English friend who had spent several months there. She spoke of a Blue Sky Restaurant that she and a number of her foreign friends had frequented. I asked her if this place was a tourist hang out. She was offended. "Not tourists," she corrected me coldly. "travellers." I had gone to Calcutta too, several times in fact, but had never seen or even heard of this place. Had I made some grave omission? I suddenly felt like someone who had gone to Agra but not seen the Taj Mahal.

So this time in Calcutta I decided to set things straight and go to the Blue Sky Restaurant. But first I had to find it. I asked friends, acquaintances, and even tourist officials, but no one had heard of it. Finally, I consulted the ubiquitous *Lonely Planet* guide book to India and, sure enough, there it was. Following its instructions, I walked down Chowringhee and near the Indian Museum, I turned onto a smaller road called Sudder Street. And about halfway down this street, there it was - the Blue Sky Restaurant.

It was a small place on the corner, painted an appropriate sky-blue color on the outside. A white man and an oriental woman, about 20 years old, stood at the entrance munching on some sandwiches and looking rather dazed. I squeezed past them and into the small restaurant. After a few seconds my eyes adjusted to the darkness inside and I saw that it was full. Full of foreigners. In fact I was the only Indian customer. The waiter showed me to a table already occupied by three others and pushed a menu into my hands. I smiled at the other occupants and sat down in the empty fourth chair. The menu consisted mostly of a variety of oatmeal and yogurt. Good healthy stuff. Giving my order of oatmeal with bananas and papaya, I settled down to look around the place.

The inside was quite plain.

Wooden tables and chairs. No air conditioning but several fans. Over my head was a large sign reading 'No Dope'. I wondered whether it meant that dope should not be used on the premises or that they had just run out of it.

Most interesting were the people. Young people of all origins, some looking as though they had not bathed or slept well in a while. The only common denominator amongst them was that each carried the *Lonely Planet* guide book to India. The place was alive with their conversation: where they had been,

what they had seen, where they were going to and, of course, what mishaps they had suffered along the way.

"I thought Varanasi was wild but Calcutta just blows my mind."

"My hotel room is full of cockroaches. I've got to find another place. What's yours like, mate?"

"I'm gonna take it easy today. My stomach is a bit upset."

"Have you seen Kalighat? Oh, you must go there."

"I'm sure the cabbie fleeced me coming in from the airport."

"Didn't I see you at the YWCA in Bangkok?"

"Next time I'm skipping Bombay and New Delhi. Calcutta is the real India."

"I don't know how long I'll stay here. Depends on what's happening."

"I'm going to do the Mother Teresa thing. You know, go to her orphanages and stuff. My sister did that last year."

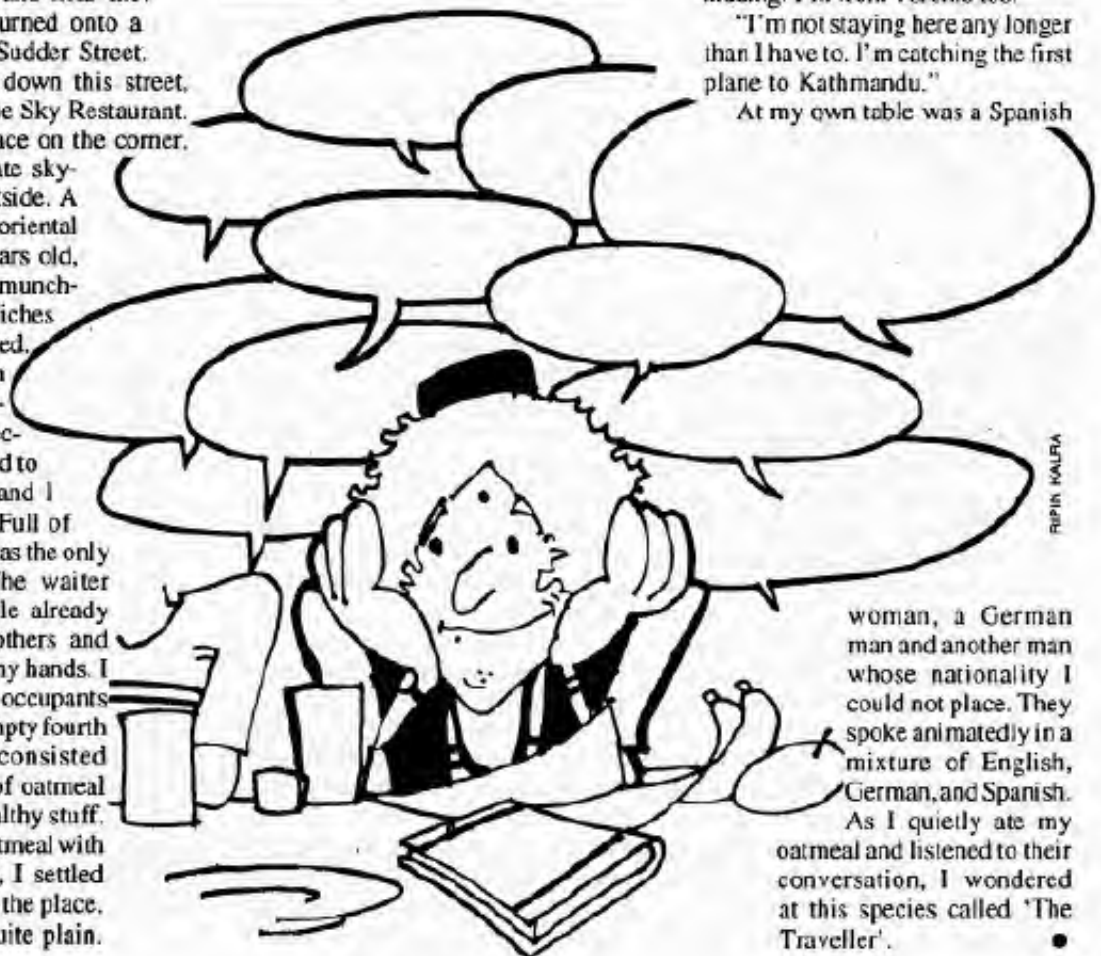
"Hey, are you from Toronto? No kidding! I'm from Toronto too."

"I'm not staying here any longer than I have to. I'm catching the first plane to Kathmandu."

At my own table was a Spanish

## A TRAVELLER'S INN

H. K. RANJANI



woman, a German man and another man whose nationality I could not place. They spoke animatedly in a mixture of English, German, and Spanish.

As I quietly ate my oatmeal and listened to their conversation, I wondered at this species called 'The Traveller'.



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(So the teachers went to her.)

Indira is eight. The youngest in the family. She lives in the Tarnakha slums of Secunderabad.

She does almost all the household work. Then she accompanies her mother, a domestic worker, to work. There she washes vessels, dusts, sweeps and at times even swabs the floor. While her brother, Sreenu, is studying at the A.P. Residential School in class six.

Unfair? But not uncommon. In India, the girl child is 'somebody else's property', and a 'poor investment'. She is the family's beast of burden. To be used until she marries...and becomes somebody else's beast.

How do these beliefs translate into statistics? Despite being biologically stronger, one out of six girls dies annually in India. And of the 12 million girls born in India last year, 3 million will not live to see their 5th birthday.

Thankfully, there are still people who ignore these statistics.

In case of Indira it was two local school

teachers, Bhagyaxmi and Janaki.

They understood the one thing that could make a difference to girls like Indira: education. So they started in a verandah of the local YMCA. The girls, 5 to 14 years old, learnt not just reading, writing, knitting and crocheting but life-related skills: health, hygiene, decision making, awareness of rights. All through practical lessons. Through dramas and puppetry.

Indira has come a long way from when Bhagyaxmi spotted her, playing in the dust. Today

Bhagyaxmi hopes to send her up for the 3rd standard examination.

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In fact, over the past 15 years, CRY has been able to help over 30 such education-related projects with expertise and funds? People like you who, bit by bit,

helped us disburse Rs. 116 lakhs, last year.

Moral of the story? Individuals can cause change. Indira will probably break the vicious cycle of ignorance and loss of rights. She'll probably help her children enjoy childhood, whether boy or girl.

Moral number two? Anybody can help, you can help. You could start with a donation to CRY. Or ask us to give you more information on how you can help girls like Indira.

Whatever you wish to do, do it now. The future has already begun.

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CLARION 2B1E07

# POEMS

Shall I sing of the charm of super-phosphate,  
Or the DDT cuisine that all of us ate  
With gloomy forecasters  
Predicting disasters  
Of nuclear power tempting fate?  
Of raindrops falling on my head,  
Leaving me bald and the forests dead?  
Or of worldly wise banks  
Playing sinister pranks  
While tropical traffic spews CO<sub>2</sub>  
and lead?  
Oh! It all sounds too fearful  
So I'll try and be cheerful  
And wish you a happy year ahead.

*Sunita Rao,  
Kalpavriksh  
New Delhi.*

## CHEAP PINEAPPLE AND SAND

And if the soul of this land  
Is behind the tourist poster  
beckoning to sun, sea and sand,  
it is equally there in the gutter

where beggars fight off stray  
cats for the slop of leftover  
dinners, where mice foray  
offal cast by itinerant hawkers.

It is there on the peeling  
alley walls weeping nicotine-  
flecked gobs of phlegm, reeking  
putrescent fruit, faeces and urine.

Cheap pineapple and tropical  
splendour you now enjoy, dear  
traveller, is paid with impossible  
lives lived out in unspeakable squalor.



## RE-BERTH ON THE HOWRAH MAIL

In thunder, lightning and pouring rain  
She made it to the station to entrain,  
Singing all the way her pet refrain -  
Defying the night with boldness she would feign -  
"What price this brain o' mine, no mere membrane,  
When using it goes against my grain?"

In an hour and a half she was on the train,  
The sole queen of the rail domain,  
Her peace and joy she could scarcely contain  
Until the examiner of tickets spoke to her plain:  
"Your ticket, madam, is yesterday's and old as champagne."  
"Sir, you're wrong, my ticket's right", she did maintain.

"Pardon me, ma'm, the T.T.E. intoned, "On the train  
you can't remain".  
"God", cried she, now smitten with migraine,  
"I beg you kind sir, to consider this in main —  
There's many a slip between the train and the brain."  
"That's logic for the road, not the railways", he tried to explain,  
But she pressed her point over and over again.

"There's no time", snapped the T.T.E., "and you protest in  
vain,  
If you don't step down, I will pull the chain."  
"Let me pay the fine," she prayed, "and a ticket obtain.  
So I don't go back home in shame and pain."  
"Well, you're right", the man agreed, "your ticket I'll retain  
On pain of a hundred bucks, for that'll be my gain".

So, on she journeyed, pouring a hundred down the drain  
And her soul into the refrain she couldn't restrain.  
The moral of the story she learnt without a cane —  
Though her mind for being absent, was under a strain -  
And proposed to make her head all sound and sane,  
Knowing, too, that He who disposes, would do as He  
doth ordain.

*Lalita Zachariah  
Vasant Kunj, New Delhi*



## THE ART OF APPROPRIATE RESPONSE

Side-lined  
watching a life slip by

Like  
sitting on a harbour wall  
as the tide ebbs

Waterfront activities  
jostle for space  
like monkey thoughts  
in a restless mind

Towards deathlessness  
this dream-tide life  
drains remorselessly out

Yet  
an idea stirs  
a vessel surges strongly  
against the flow  
landing safely  
in thy sheltered haven

The choice in every moment:  
to wrestle the tiller of history's course

Or  
to flow gracefully before the current  
knowing that all things turn of their own  
naturally

The possibility of sleeping unawareness remains

Man and moment craft the response  
collectively - God's enduring will  
the purpose behind all adversity  
ensuring that  
all will be well

An uncertain security beckons  
tangled ropes are cast ashore  
and beneath our feet  
the swell and sway of passion  
surge once more.

A calling to adventure  
in the mainstream  
of colour, froth and carnage  
alternatively:  
reflection in the still pool of temperance,  
knowing that beyond all chaos and illusion  
the glorious pattern  
reveals the abode of the soul's refuge.

Freedom  
is knowing that uncertainty  
is not insecurity.



ORION

## UN-ROCK-LIKE

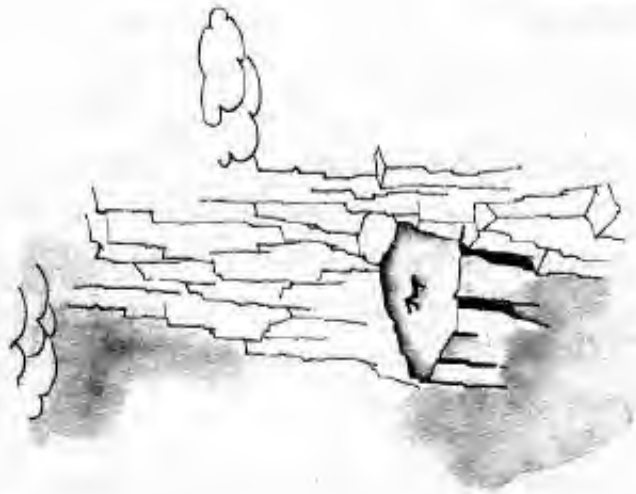
Unexpectedly there  
dark in the blue and shingle mist  
just above the tide-line and the ...ing  
there  
sitting like an expectantly empty table  
un-rock like  
your perfectly flat top demanding a feast  
of relinquishment.

Dwarfed by mighty yellow cliffs  
both I and the rock  
together  
recognise our solid yet transient passage  
through a common  
defencelessness

So I climbed aboard and lay there  
above and below everything  
just letting the sound  
the sound of waves  
wash completely through me

I lie there  
Still as no-thingness  
not looking  
cleansed of all limitation  
dissolved to nothing more or less  
than an ageless smile  
refreshed by the swashing rhythms of the sea  
Body drowned in floods of undifferentiated love  
mind deep as the timeless ocean of memory.

*Dave Kelf*  
Seaton, Devon,  
England



*Dave Kelf*

Send in your poems, with your name, age, occupation and address to:  
THE EYE 39, Anand Lok, New Delhi-110049



*One Vishnusharman shrewdly gleaning  
All wordly wisdom's inner meaning,  
In these five books the  
charm compresses  
Of all such books the world possesses.*

# Panchatantra

*It is said that an ounce of sense contained in the Panchatantra is better than a ton of scholarship. Most of us are familiar with it from our childhood as 'once-upon-a-time' stories and have read them in abridged forms or in comics. Rarely have we encountered a literal translation in verse form. Indeed, these wise verses, often epigrammatic in style, go to make the real character of the Panchatantra. The stories are charming when regarded as pure narrative, but it is the beauty, wisdom and wit of the verses which lift the Panchatantra above the best story books.*

*The Panchatantra is a 'niti shastra' or textbook of 'niti'. The word 'niti' roughly means the 'wise conduct of life'. It is witty, mischievous and profoundly sane. The word, 'Panchatantra' means, the 'Five Books', the 'Pentateuch'. Each of the five books are independent, consisting of a framing story with numerous, inserted stories, told by one or another of the characters of the main narrative. The device of the framing story is familiar in oriental works, as in the Arabian Nights. The large majority of the actors are animals, who have, of course, a fairly constant character. Thus, the lion is strong, but dull of wit, the jackal, crafty, the heron stupid, the cat, a hypocrite. The animal actors present far more vividly and shrewdly, undeceived and free of all sentimentality, a view, that piercing the humbug of every false ideal, reveals with incomparable wit, the sources of lasting joy. And this is how it happened...*

**I**n the southern country is a city called Maiden's Delight. There lived a king named Immortal Power. He was familiar with all the works dealing with the wise conduct of life. His feet were made dazzling by the

tangle of rays of light, from jewels in the diadems of mighty kings who knelt before him. He had reached the far shore of all the arts that embellish life. This king had three sons. Their names were Rich-Power, Fierce-Power and

Endless-Power and they were supreme block-heads.

Now when the king perceived that they were hostile to education, he summoned his counsellors and said, "Gentlemen, it is known to you that these sons of mine, being hostile to education, are lacking in discernment. So when I behold them, my kingdom brings me no happiness, though all external thorns are drawn. For there is wisdom in the proverb:

*Of sons unborn, or dead, or fools,  
Unborn or dead will do:  
They cause a little grief, no doubt;  
But fools, a long life through.*

and again:

*To what good purpose can a cow  
That brings no calf nor milk be bent?  
Or why beget a son who proves  
A dunce and disobedient?*

Some means must therefore be devised to awaken their intelligence."

And they, one after another, replied; "O King, first one learns grammar, in twelve years. If this subject has somehow been mastered, then one masters the books on religion and practical life. Then the intelligence awakens."

But one of their number, a counselor named Keen, said: "O King, the duration of life is limited, and the verbal sciences require much time for mastery. Therefore let some kind of epitome be devised to wake their intelligence. There is a proverb that says:

*Since verbal sciences have  
no final end,  
Since life is short, and  
obstacles impend,  
Let central facts be picked and  
firmly fixed,  
As swans extract the milk  
with water mixed.*

"Now, there is a Brahmin here named Vishnusharman, with a reputation for competence in numerous

sciences. Entrust the princes to him. He will certainly make them intelligent in a twinkling.

When the king had listened to this, he summoned Vishnusharman and said, "Holy sir, as a favour to me you must make these princes incomparable masters of the art of practical life. In return, I will bestow upon you a hundred land grants."

And Vishnusharman made this answer to the king, "O king, listen. Here is the plain truth. I am not the man to sell good learning for a hundred land grants. But if I do not, in six month's time, make the boys acquainted with the art of intelligent living, I will give up my own name. Let us cut the matter short. Listen to my lion roar. My boasting arises from no greed for cash. Besides, I have no use for money; I am eighty years old, and all the objects of sensual desire have lost their charm. But in order that your request may be granted, I will show a sporting spirit with reference to artistic matters. Make a note of the date. If I fail to render your sons, in six month's time, incomparable masters of the art of intelligent living, then His Majesty is at liberty to show me His Majestic bare bottom."

When the king, surrounded by his counsellors, had listened to the Brahmin's highly unconventional promise, he was dumbstruck. He entrusted the princes to him, and experienced supreme content.

Meanwhile, Vishnusharman took the boys, went home, and made them learn by heart, five books which he composed and called

- (i) The Loss of Friends
- (ii) The Winning of Friends
- (iii) Crows and Owls
- (iv) Loss of Gains
- (v) Ill-considered Action.

These the princes learned, and in six month's time they answered the prescription. Since that day this work on the art of intelligent living, called *Panchatantra*, or the *Five Books*, has travelled the world, aiming at awakening the intelligence in the young.

## THE STORY OF THE LAST EPISODE...

There once lived a Brahmin whose wife, chafing under their poverty, nagged him all day. Weary of her taunts, he finally undertook a long journey and entered a great forest. While searching for water, he came upon a well in which were trapped a tiger, a monkey, a snake, and a man who, upon seeing him, all pleaded for rescue. Quelling his natural fear, he pulled out the three animals who swore to return his help. They warned him also not to rescue the man who they said, was a treacherous fellow. But pity for his fellow human overcame him and he rescued the man too. Then the man revealing himself to be a goldsmith, went his way after offering to help him.

The monkey and the tiger fulfilled their promise, the latter giving him a gold necklace taken from a prince he had slain. But when the Brahmin took the necklace to the goldsmith in order to have it sold,

the treacherous fellow, recognising the prince's necklace, gave it to the king without revealing the full story. The Brahmin was sentenced to death. He remembered the snake, who promptly appeared and devised a plot to help him. He went and bit the queen. When none could revive her, the Brahmin offered to help - and cured her by a mere touch!

In gratitude, the King heaped honour upon the Brahmin. The goldsmith was arrested. The Jackal, to prove the treacherous intentions of Lively the Bull, told this tale to his master, Rusty the Lion. Rusty refused to believe that a mere grass-nibbler like Lively could harm a carnivore like him. But Victor said:

*The weak, malicious fool*

*Can use a keener tool:*

*It sharpens sword-blades, but*

*The whetstone cannot cut.*

And to prove his point, Victor told Rusty the story of LEAP AND CREEP.

## Leap and Creep

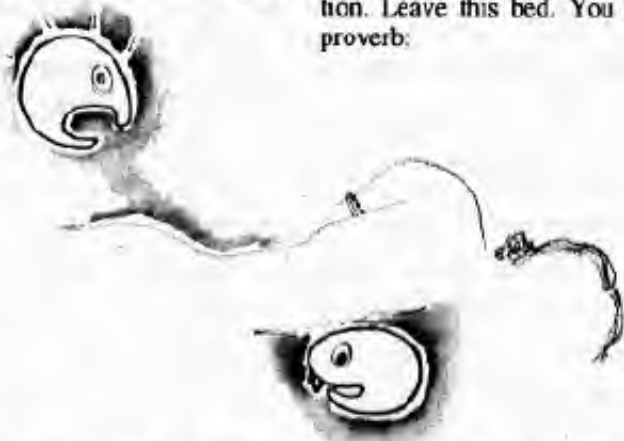
In the palace of a certain king stood an incomparable bed, blessed with every cubicular virtue. In a corner of its coverlet lived a female louse named

Creep. Surrounded by a thriving family of sons and daughters, with the sons and daughters of sons and daughters, and with more remote descendants, she



drank the king's blood as he slept. On this diet she grew plump and handsome.

While she was living there in this manner, a flea named Leap drifted in on the wind and dropped on the bed. This flea felt supreme satisfaction on examining the bed - the wonderful deli-



cacy of its coverlet, its double pillow, its exceptional softness like that of a broad, Gangetic sand-bank, its delicious perfume. Charmed by the sheer delight of touching it, he hopped this way and that until - fate willed it so - he chanced to meet Creep, who said to him: "Where do you come from? This is a dwelling fit for a king. Begone, and lose no time about it." "Madam," said he, "you should not say such things.

For

*The Brahman reverences fire,  
Himself the lower castes' desire;  
The wife reveres her husband dear;  
But all the world must guests revere.*

Now I am your guest. I have of late sampled the various blood of Brahmins, warriors, business men, and serfs, but found it acid, slimy, quite unwholesome. On the contrary, he who reposes on this bed must have a delightful vital fluid, just like nectar. It must be free from morbidity, since wind, bile, and phlegm are kept in harmony by constant and heedful use of potions prepared by physicians. It must be enriched by viands unctuous, tender, melting in the mouth; viands prepared from the flesh of the choicest creatures of land, water, and air, seasoned furthermore with sugar, pomegranate, gin-

ger, and pepper. To me it seems an elixir of life. Therefore, with your kind permission, I plan to taste this sweet and fragrant substance, thus combining pleasure and profit."

"No," said she. "For fiery-mouthed stingers like you, it is out of the question. Leave this bed. You know the proverb:

*The fool who does not know  
His own resource, his foe,  
His duty, time, and place,  
Who sets a reckless pace,  
Will by the wayside fall,  
Will reap no fruit at all."*

Thereupon he fell at her feet, repeating his request. And she agreed, since courtesy was her hobby, and since when the story of that prince of sharpers, Muladeva, was being repeated to the king while she lay on a corner of the coverlet, she had heard how Muladeva quoted this verse in answer to the question of a certain damsel:

*Whoever, angry though he be,  
Has spurned a suppliant enemy,  
In Shiva, Vishnu, Brahma, he  
Has scorned the Holy Trinity.*

Recalling this, she agreed, but added: "However, you must not come to din-

ner at the wrong place or time." "What is the right place and what is the right time?" he asked. "Being a newcomer, I am not *au courant*." And she replied: "When the king's body is mastered by wine, fatigue, or sleep, then you may quietly bite him on the feet. This is the right place and the right time." To these conditions he gave his assent.

In spite of this arrangement, the famished bungler, when the king had just dozed off in the early evening, bit him on the back. And the poor king, as if burned by a firebrand, as if stung by a scorpion, as if touched by a torch, bounded to his feet, scratched his back, and cried to a servant: "Rascal! Somebody bit me. You must hunt through this bed until you find the insect."

Now Leap heard the king's command and in terrified haste crept into a crevice in the bed. Then the king's servants entered, and following their master's orders, brought a lamp and made a minute inspection. As fate would have it, they came upon Creep as she crouched in the lap of the fabric, and killed her with her family.

"And that is why I say:

*With no stranger share your house...*

and the rest of it. And another thing. My lord and king does wrong in neglecting the servants who are his by inheritance. For

*Whoever leaves his friends,  
Strange folk to cherish,  
Like foolish Fierce-Howl, will  
Untimely perish."*

"How was that?" asked Rusty. And Victor told the story of:

THE BLUE JACKAL

(to be contd...)

Illustrations: Oron.

*In 1924, Arthur W. Ryder, the well known American oriental scholar translated the Panchantra from Sanskrit to English. It is one of the best of existing translations in any foreign language. The text here translated, dates back from the year 1199A.D. We are happy to serialise and present the Panchatantra, interspersing verse and prose as translated by Ryder and published by Jaico.*

THE PANCHATANTRA SERIES IS SPONSORED BY CHOKHANI GROUP OF COMPANIES.





अनुभूतियों का  
एक पूरा संसार  
उंगलियों से गढ़ा जाता  
रंगों से बुना जाता  
आँखों से आत्मा तक  
एक झंकार-सा बजता

---

मध्यप्रदेश का हस्तशिल्प

---



● The newest addition to the Heritage Hotels list is the Stok Palace, which is to be turned into an 80 room palace hotel. With the Leh Palace in shambles, the Stok Palace was perhaps the only living monument for the Ladakhis, which will now be out of bounds for them, but accessible to those who can pay the high tariff. (Nina Rao)

● Spiti - Thought we would go far from the madding crowd. Thought so the madding crowd too. Thought Zanjar was a 'new discovered' land. Thought so the madding crowd, too. (Shubendu Kaushik - *Endangered Spiti - AN Newsletter*)

● Nepal - The tourist influx is also blamed for the damage to the environment. Only 15 years ago, the city of Kathmandu, with its ancient Hindu temples, was free of smog, clogged traffic and tall buildings. (Gillian Forrester - *Deccan Herald*)

● Panic has gripped this oasis town (Jaipur), following reports about the widespread prevalence of AIDS. State and local doctors, officials, NGOs, hotel owners, tourguides and local residents claim this is because of the growing sexual promiscuity between the camel riders and foreign tourists. (*Times of India News Service*)

● Fatehpur Bli - In the shadow of the abandoned city, visited now only by tourists, a culture of mendicancy and servility has grown. Children have acquired the accomplishment of touching the hearts of visitors by saying, 'No mother, no father', and to ask for money in all principal European languages and Japanese. (Jeremy Beabrook - *The Pioneer*)

● Goa - Young Goan girls cannot go for a walk or swim in their own beaches without having a number of tourists asking them their 'charges', this is the price we have to pay for the sinful advertisements and media propaganda resorted to by the tourism industry. (Fiona Dias - social worker)

● Orissa - The Janata Dal government plans to setup a beach resort and hotel complex between Puri and Konarak. Traditional occupations like fishing are now being threatened. The entire reserve forest in Koharak-Balukhand Sanctuary may be destroyed in the second phase of the project and affect the ecological balance. (*Equations Newsletter*, October 1993)

● Kodagu, Coorg - The money spent by the state on bringing tourism to this area would be better spent in restoring its agricultural prosperity, which would bring higher returns than tourism. (G.B. Mathur)

● Karnataka - Coming up about 30 minutes drive from Bangalore is the Shangri-la Resorts at a whopping cost of \$22 million...on illegally converted village commons under the patronage of a local liquor/construction industry baron. Most villagers are resigned to relocating en masse. (Leo F. Salasna - *Equations Newsletter* October 1993)

● Tamil Nadu - With temple towns being developed as tourist resorts, the state hopes to attract those who like to pray as well as those who like to play. (Kavitha Shetty with Indira Kannan - *India Today*)

● Kerala - The cultural pageantry that the Kerala tourism department puts up for the foreign tourists is a gross affront to its heritage...lads of rupees are looted to host lifeless cultural extravaganzas. (K. Venu - *Equations Newsletter* October 1993)

● In Sri Lanka, sex is just one of the many commodities ranging from seashells to drugs - that beach boys will happily sell to tourists. The probable increase of high risk sexual contacts between tourists and Sri Lankan youth is something that worries the government's health department. (Julian West - *World Aids*)

● Lakshadweep - The number of tourists visiting the islands has gone up from 723 in 1990 to 3527 in 1992. (JNI)